

ESTTA Tracking number: **ESTTA1299668**

Filing date: **07/25/2023**

IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE  
BEFORE THE TRADEMARK TRIAL AND APPEAL BOARD

Proceeding no.	92080089
Party	Plaintiff James T Smith
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Submission	Motion to Consolidate
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Date	07/25/2023
Attachments	Motion to Consolidate and for Leave to Amend - Smith v. Addy - 1.pdf(5534726 bytes ) Motion to Consolidate and for Leave to Amend - Smith v. Addy - 2.pdf(5508686 bytes )

IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE  
BEFORE THE TRADEMARK TRIAL AND APPEAL BOARD

<i>In re Matter of Registration No. 5,240,371 for the mark: BACK TO CALI in Classes 9 and 41</i>  James T. Smith  Petitioner,  vs.  David Addy,  Registrant.	Cancellation No. 92-080089  <b>PETITIONER JAMES T. SMITH'S MOTION TO CONSOLIDATE WITH CANCELLATION NO. 92-082286 AND MOTION FOR LEAVE TO FILE SECOND AMENDED PETITION FOR CANCELLATION</b>
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**Motion to Consolidate**

Pursuant to TBMP § 511, Petitioner James T. Smith (“Petitioner”) hereby moves to consolidate these proceedings with his co-pending petition to cancel Registrant David Addy’s (“Registrant”) registration of BACK TO CALI, Cancellation No. 92-082286 (the “Class 25 Cancellation”).

In this proceeding, Petitioner petitions to cancel Registrant’s registration of BACK TO CALI in Classes 9 and 41 based on a likelihood of confusion with Petitioner’s GOING BACK TO CALI mark for musical recordings, false suggestion of a connection with Petitioner, abandonment, and non-use. 7 TTABVue. In the Class 25 Cancellation, Petitioner petitions to cancel Registrant’s Class 25 registration of BACK TO CALI on similar grounds, namely, likelihood of confusion with Petitioner’s GOING BACK TO CALI mark for musical recordings, false suggestion of a connection with Petitioner, and non-use. Canc. No. 92-082286, 1

TTABVUE. Registrant's affirmative defenses in the proceedings are identical or substantially similar. *See* 9 TTABVUE; Canc. No. 92-082286, 4 TTABVUE.

This proceeding and the Class 25 Cancellation should be consolidated. The parties to the proceedings are identical and there are common questions of law or fact and law, most notably, whether Petitioner has rights in the GOING BACK TO CALI mark and whether Registrant's registration of BACK TO CALI results in a likelihood of confusion and/or false suggestion of a connection, as well as similar questions regarding Registrant's use— or lack thereof — of BACK TO CALI for the goods and services identified in its registrations at issue and Registrant's affirmative defenses. Given the foregoing, consolidation would save time, effort, and expense for all involved.

In view of the similarity of issues and identity of parties in this proceeding and the Class 25 Cancellation and in the interest of judicial economy, Petitioner requests that the Board consolidate this proceeding and the Class 25 Cancellation pursuant to TBMP § 511, and reset the pre-trial and trial dates consistent with those set forth in the Class 25 Cancellation.

**Motion for Leave to Amend**

Pursuant to TBMP § 507, Petitioner hereby moves for leave to file the enclosed second amended petition for cancellation this proceeding. *See* **Exhibit A**. As reflected in the enclosed redline (*see* **Exhibit B**), Petitioner seeks leave to correct the name of his song and trademark at issue, which his counsel inadvertently identified as “Goin’ Back to Cali” and GOIN’ BACK TO CALI, respectively, instead of “Going Back to Cali” and GOING BACK TO CALI. Notably, Exhibit E to the original and amended petitions for cancellation correctly identify the song and trademark as “Going Back to Cali” and GOING BACK TO CALI. 7 TTABVUE 60-63. Also,

Petitioner's petition for cancellation in the Class 25 Cancellation uses the correct song title and trademark. Canc. No. 92-082286, 1 TTABVue

It is well established that leave must be freely given when justice so requires. TBMP § 507. Here, entry of the amendment will correct Petitioner's inadvertent use of "Goin'" instead of "Going." The amendment will not violate any settled law. Also, the amendment does not prejudice Registrant. The nature of Petitioner's claims against Registrant remain the same, and Registrant has always been on notice of the actual name of Petitioner's song and trademark by virtue of the exhibits attached to the earlier iterations of the petition for cancellation.

Respectfully submitted,

Dated: July 25, 2023

/Paul A. Bost/  
Jill M. Pietrini  
Paul A. Bost  
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#### **CERTIFICATE OF E-FILING**

I hereby certify that this **PETITIONER JAMES T. SMITH'S MOTION TO CONSOLIDATE WITH CANCELLATION NO. 92-082286 AND MOTION FOR LEAVE TO FILE SECOND AMENDED PETITION FOR CANCELLATION** is being transmitted electronically to Commissioner of Trademarks, Attn: Trademark Trial and Appeal Board through ESTTA pursuant to 37 C.F.R. §2.195(a), on this 25<sup>th</sup> day of July, 2023.

/Paul A. Bost/  
Paul A. Bost



**CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE**

I hereby certify that this **PETITIONER JAMES T. SMITH'S MOTION TO CONSOLIDATE WITH CANCELLATION NO. 92-082286 AND MOTION FOR LEAVE TO FILE SECOND AMENDED PETITION FOR CANCELLATION** is being sent by electronic mail addressed to danielq@yoffecooper.com on this 25<sup>th</sup> day of July, 2023.

/Brenda King/  
Brenda King

SMRH:4858-6225-2914.1

# EXHIBIT A

IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE  
BEFORE THE TRADEMARK TRIAL AND APPEAL BOARD

*In re Matter of Reg. No. 5,240,371 for the trademark  
**BACK TO CALI** in Classes 9 and 41*

James Todd Smith,

Petitioner,

v.

David Addy,

Registrant.

Cancellation No. 92-080089

**SECOND AMENDED PETITION FOR  
CANCELLATION**

Commissioner for Trademarks  
ATTN: Trademark Trial and Appeal Board  
P.O. Box 1451  
Alexandria, VA 22313-1451

Dear Commissioner:

Petitioner James Todd Smith, an individual and United States citizen (“Petitioner”), having his principal place of business at 6311 Romaine Street, Suite 4330, Los Angeles, California 90038, believes that he is and will be damaged by the trademark shown in Registration No. 5,240,371 for the mark BACK TO CALI (the “Registration”), and hereby petitions to cancel such Registration on the following grounds:

**FACTUAL BACKGROUND REGARDING  
PETITIONER’S GOING BACK TO CALI MARK**

1. Petitioner is the world renowned American rapper, record producer, composer, actor and entrepreneur professionally known as LL Cool J (“LL Cool J” or “Petitioner”). Attached hereto as **Exhibit A** is a true and correct printout from the informational website Wikipedia describing LL Cool J.

2. Over the past thirty-seven years, Petitioner has released thirteen studio albums and two greatest hits compilations, has appeared in numerous films, including *Any Given Sunday*, *S.W.A.T.*, *Mindhunters*, and others, and currently plays NCIS Special Agent Sam Hanna in the CBS crime drama

television series *NCIS: Los Angeles*. See Exhibit A; see also **Exhibit B**, printouts from Petitioner's profile on <imdb.com>. Petitioner also maintains a website at <llcoolj.com>, and social media pages on Facebook (7.2 million followers), Instagram (2.9 million followers), and Twitter (5 million followers). True and correct printouts of pages from the aforementioned websites reflecting the online presence and number of followers enjoyed by Petitioner are attached as **Exhibit C**. In addition, Petitioner has been credited with hundreds of television appearances, including as a guest, performer, presenter, and host (see Exhibit B).

3. During his extensive career, Petitioner has won two Grammy Awards, six MTV Video Music Awards, three Soul Train Music Awards, five NAACP Image Awards, a Teen Choice award, BET Comedy Award, and Billboard Music Award, and has been nominated for numerous additional awards, including four Primetime Emmys. Petitioner was honored with the I Am Hip Hop Award at the BET Hip-Hop Awards in 2011, given a star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame in 2016, and inducted into The Rock and Roll Hall of Fame in 2021. In 2017, Petitioner made history as the first hip-hop artist to earn a prestigious Kennedy Center Honors, one of America's highest achievements for performers. Attached as **Exhibit D** are true and correct internet printouts regarding Petitioner's many awards, honors, and nominations.

4. Petitioner is known for numerous hit songs, including the song "Going Back to Cali." "Going Back to Cali" was released in 1988 on the soundtrack for the hit motion picture *Less Than Zero*, and continues to be offered for sale and sold to date. The song was written by Petitioner and Rick Rubin, the legendary music producer and record company executive. On May 30, 2017, "Going Back to Cali" was certified platinum by the Recording Industry Association of America ("RIAA"), indicating sales in excess of one million units. See Exhibit A; see also **Exhibit E**, a printout from Wikipedia, and **Exhibit F**, a printout from RIAA's website at <riaa.com>, evidencing the platinum certification and fame of Petitioner's song "Going Back to Cali." Because of Petitioner's tremendous success and acclaim, fans

worldwide have come to associate GOING BACK TO CALI with Petitioner, and GOING BACK CALI has acquired secondary meaning and functions as a trademark.

**FACTUAL BACKGROUND REGARDING REGISTRANT  
AND THE REGISTRATION OF BACK TO CALI**

5. On November 17, 2016, Registrant David Addy, an individual and citizen of Germany, having an address of 2251 Altisma Way, #202, Carlsbad, California 92009, applied to register the mark BACK TO CALI for “Musical sound recordings; audiovisual recordings featuring music and musical entertainment; downloadable musical sound recordings; downloadable audiovisual recordings featuring music and musical entertainment; pre-recorded DVDs, CDs featuring music and musical entertainment; interactive applications included in this class, namely, CD-ROMs featuring music and musical entertainment; computer software and computer programs used to access and download sound recordings and audio-visual recordings in the field of music; computer game software and computer game programs; downloadable electronic publications in the nature of magazines, newsletters, catalogs, and booklets in the fields of music, the music industry, musical entertainment, musical recordings, and musical artists; sound files in machine-readable form, recorded and downloadable, namely, musical recordings included in this class; image and sound files in machine-readable form, recorded and downloadable, namely, musical audio-visual recordings included in this class; downloadable ring tones via the internet and wireless devices; magnetically encoded pre-paid telephone cards; smart cards containing programming used to download recordings and audio-visual recordings in the field of music” in Class 9, and for “Educational services, namely, providing classes, seminars, workshops, training in the fields of music, the music industry, musical entertainment, musical recordings, and musical artists, producing recordings and organizing musical tours; entertainment services, namely, providing a website featuring information in the field of music and providing a website featuring information in the field of musical sound recordings, video clips, audiovisual recordings featuring music and musical artists, their histories, their professional engagements and their musical recordings and other entertainment

information; entertainment services, namely, arranging and conducting concerts, presentation of live show performances, organizing a musical festival, concerts and tours of musical groups for concerts, live musical performances and providing information on musical festivals, music groups and information on the musical groups appearing in such a festival by means of a website and a global computer network; organizing community sporting and cultural activities; music publishing services; publishing electronic publications, not downloadable; publication of texts other than publicity texts; services of a publishing firm, except printing, in the nature of publishing of electronic publications, books and magazines; publishing printed matter other than for advertising purposes in electronic form, namely, online electronic publishing of books, songbooks, and sheet music; organization of sports competitions for education and entertainment; editing of radio and television programs; entertainment services, namely, artists' services in the nature of live musical performances; ticket reservation and booking services for entertainment in the fields of sporting, entertainment, and cultural events and science expositions. providing radio and television programs in the field of music, the music industry, musical entertainment, musical recordings, and musical artists; educational and entertainment services, namely, continuing programs about music, musical groups, musical recordings, musical video recordings accessible by radio, television, mobile phones, and computer networks; presentation of musical performances; production of television shows, films, television programs, audio, video and cinematographic recordings; organization of entertainment shows, namely, production of television shows; music production services; sound recording studio services; composing of music for others, film production" in Class 41 on an in-use basis, claiming a date of first use anywhere and in commerce of January 1, 2016. The application was assigned Serial No. 87/240,256 (the "Application").

6. On July 11, 2017, the Application matured to, and the Office issued, the Registration.

**FIRST BASIS FOR CANCELLATION**  
**(Likelihood of Confusion)**

7. Petitioner incorporates by reference the allegations contained in Paragraphs 1 to 6 herein.

8. Petitioner's GOING BACK TO CALI mark was used for musical recordings prior to the mark shown in the Registration. Petitioner has priority over Registrant. Petitioner's use of his GOING BACK TO CALI mark for musical recordings pre-dates Registrant's filing date of the Application and any use of the BACK TO CALI mark by decades.

9. The continued registration of BACK TO CALI by Registrant is likely to cause confusion, mistake, or deception as to the source or origin of, or affiliation, connection, or association with, Petitioner's musical recordings.

**SECOND BASIS FOR CANCELLATION**  
**(False Suggestion of a Connection)**

10. Petitioner incorporates the allegations contained in Paragraphs 1 to 9 herein.

11. The name GOING BACK TO CALI is associated with Petitioner as a result of his fame as LL Cool J and the fame of his "Going Back to Cali" platinum-selling song released in 1988.

12. Registrant's BACK TO CALI mark is nearly identical to the name GOING BACK TO CALI, which was previously used by Petitioner. The name GOING BACK TO CALI is associated with Petitioner, and is recognized as such in that it uniquely and unmistakably points to Petitioner under his LL Cool J pseudonym. Petitioner is not connected with the products and services sold or offered by Registrant (to the extent such products and services are still offered) under Registrant's BACK TO CALI mark. The fame and reputation of Petitioner is of such a nature that a connection with Petitioner and/or LL Cool J is presumed when Registrant's BACK TO CALI mark is used for or with Registrant's goods and services.

13. The mark shown in the Registration is associated with the Petitioner and/or LL Cool J, and thus, falsely suggests a connection with Petitioner and/or LL Cool J.

**THIRD BASIS FOR CANCELLATION  
(Abandonment)**

14. Petitioner incorporates the allegations contained in Paragraphs 1 to 13 herein.

15. On information and belief, Registrant is not currently using the BACK TO CALI mark for any of the goods or services identified in the Registration in the United States. On information and belief, Registrant does not intend to resume use of the BACK TO CALI mark for the goods and or services listed in the Registration within the reasonably foreseeable future.

16. On information and belief, Registrant has not used the BACK TO CALI mark for any of the goods or services listed in the Registration in the United States for more than three consecutive years, demonstrating a *prima facie* case of abandonment under 15 U.S.C. § 1127.

**FOURTH BASIS FOR CANCELLATION  
(Non-Use of Mark)**

17. Petitioner incorporates the allegations contained in Paragraphs 1 to 16 herein.

18. On information and belief, at the time of filing the Application, Registrant was not using the BACK TO CALI mark on or for all of the goods and services for which registration was being sought.

19. Registrant nonetheless claimed use of the BACK TO CALI mark for all of the goods and services identified in the Application and the Registration issued on that basis.

**DAMAGE CAUSED TO PETITIONER**

20. Petitioner will be damaged by the continued registration of BACK TO CALI in that the Registration gives Registrant a *prima facie* exclusive right to the use of BACK TO CALI, despite the likelihood of confusion, mistake, or deception, the likelihood of association, connection, or affiliation with Petitioner and Petitioner's GOING BACK TO CALI trademark, or as to the origin, sponsorship or approval by Petitioner of Registrant's goods or commercial activities, the false suggestion of a connection, as described above, and the non-use of the BACK TO CALI mark for all identified goods and services at the time of filing the Application. Petitioner is further damaged by the Registration because



Registrant is no longer using BACK TO CALI for the goods and services identified in the Registration and, on information and belief, has not been used for three or more years.

WHEREFORE, Petitioner prays that Registration No. 5,240,371 issued on July 11, 2017, be canceled.

Respectfully submitted,  
SHEPPARD MULLIN RICHTER & HAMPTON LLP

Dated: July 25, 2023

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SMRH:4890-7803-9410.1

# Exhibit A



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## LL Cool J

From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

**James Todd Smith** (born January 14, 1968), known professionally as **LL Cool J** (short for **L**adies **L**ove **Cool** **J**ames),<sup>[3]</sup> is an American rapper, songwriter, record producer, and actor.<sup>[4]</sup> His breakthrough success came with his single "I Need a Beat" and his debut album, *Radio*, in 1985. His sophomore album, *Bigger and Deffer*, supported by singles "I'm Bad" and "I Need Love," were released to commercial success and acclaim in the summer of 1987. LL Cool J became an early hip hop act to achieve mainstream success alongside Def Jam Recordings groups Beastie Boys and Run-DMC.

LL Cool J has released 13 studio albums and two greatest hits compilations. His twelfth album *Exit 13* (2008), was his last for his long-tenured deal with Def Jam Recordings. LL Cool J has appeared in numerous films, including *Halloween H20*, *In Too Deep*, *Any Given Sunday*, *Deep Blue Sea*, *S.W.A.T.*, *Mindhunters*, and *Edison*. He currently plays NCIS Special Agent Sam Hanna in the CBS crime drama television series *NCIS: Los Angeles*. LL Cool J also is the host of *Lip Sync Battle* on Paramount Network.<sup>[5]</sup>

A two time Grammy Award winner, LL Cool J is known for hip hop songs such as "Going Back to Cali", "I'm Bad", "The Boomin' System", "Rock the Bells", and "Mama Said Knock You Out", as well as R&B hits such as "Doin' It", "I Need Love", "All I Have", "Around the Way Girl" and "Hey Lover". In 2010, VH1 placed him on their "100 Greatest Artists Of All Time" list.<sup>[6]</sup> In 2017, LL Cool J became the first rapper to receive the Kennedy Center Honors.<sup>[7]</sup> In 2021, he was inducted into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame with an award for Musical Excellence.<sup>[8]</sup>

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LL Cool J receiving the 2017 Kennedy Center Honors

<b>Born</b>	James Todd Smith January 14, 1968 (age 54) Bay Shore, New York, U.S.
<b>Occupation</b>	Rapper • songwriter • record producer • actor
<b>Years active</b>	1984–present
<b>Spouse(s)</b>	Simone Smith (m. 1995) <sup>[1]</sup>
<b>Partner(s)</b>	Kidada Jones (1992–1994) <sup>[2]</sup>
<b>Children</b>	4 <sup>[1]</sup>
	<b>Musical career</b>
<b>Origin</b>	Queens, New York, U.S.
<b>Genres</b>	Hip hop
<b>Instruments</b>	Vocals
<b>Labels</b>	429 • Def Jam • Violator • S-BRO
<b>Website</b>	<span>llcool.com</span> <span><span></span></span>

## Early life and family [edit]

James Todd Smith was born on January 14, 1968 in Bay Shore, New York to Ondrea Griffith (born January 19, 1946)<sup>9</sup> and James Louis Smith Jr.<sup>10</sup> also known as James Nunya.<sup>11</sup><sup>12</sup> According to the *Chicago Tribune*, “[a]s a kid growing up middle class and Catholic in Queens, life for LL was heart-breaking. His father shot his mother and grandfather, nearly killing them both. When 4-year-old LL found them, blood was everywhere.”<sup>13</sup> In 1972, Smith and his mother moved into his grandparents’ home in St. Albans, Queens, where he was raised.<sup>14</sup><sup>15</sup> He suffered physical and mental abuse from his mother’s ex-boyfriend Roscoe.<sup>16</sup>

Smith began rapping at the age of 10, influenced by the hip-hop group *The Treacherous Three*. In March 1984, sixteen-year-old Smith was creating *demo tapes* in his grandparents' home.<sup>[16]</sup> His grandfather, a jazz saxophonist, bought him \$2,000 worth of equipment, including two turntables, an audio mixer and an amplifier.<sup>[17]</sup> His mother was also supportive of his musical endeavors, using her tax refund to buy him a Korg drum machine.<sup>[18]</sup> Smith has stated that by the time he received musical equipment from his relatives, he "was already a rapper. In this neighborhood, the kids grow up in rap. It's like speaking Spanish if you grow up in an all-Spanish house."<sup>[17]</sup> This was at the same time that NYU student Rick Rubin and promoter-manager Russell Simmons founded the then-independent Def Jam label. By using the mixer he had received from his grandfather, Smith produced and mixed his own demos and sent them to various record companies throughout New York City, including Def Jam.<sup>[17]</sup>

Musical career  | edit

In the VH1 documentary *Pleasant Rock: The Story of Hip Hop and the Crack Generation*, Smith revealed that he initially called himself J-Ski, but did not want to associate his stage name with the cocaine culture (The rappers who use "Ski" or "Blow" as part of their stage name, e.g., *Kurtis Blow* and *Joekii Blow*, were associated with the rise of the cocaine culture, as depicted in the 1983 remake of *Scarface*). Under his new stage name LL Cool J (an abbreviation for *Ladies Love Cool James*), coined by his friend and fellow rapper *Mikee D*,<sup>[19][24]</sup> Smith was signed by Def Jam, which led to the release of his first official record, the 12-inch single "I Need a Beat" (1984).<sup>[18]</sup> The single was a hard-hitting, streetwise b-boy song with spare beats and ballistic rhymes.<sup>[18]</sup> Smith later discussed his search for a label, stating "I sent my demo to many different companies, but it was Def Jam where I found my home."<sup>[20]</sup> That same year, Smith made his professional debut concert performance at Manhattan Center High School. In a later interview, LL Cool J recalled the experience, stating "They pushed the lunch room tables together and me and my DJ, Cut Creator, started playing. ... As soon as it was over there were girls screaming and asking for autographs. Right then and there I said 'This is what I want to do'."<sup>[21]</sup> LL's debut single sold over 100,000 copies and helped establish both Def Jam as a label and Smith as a rapper. The commercial success of "I Need a Beat", along with the *Beastie Boys'* single "Rock Hard" (1984), helped lead Def Jam to a distribution deal with Columbia Records the following year.<sup>[22]</sup>

1985–1987: *Radio* [edit]

*Radio* was released to critical acclaim, both for production innovation and LL's powerful rap.<sup>[23]</sup> Released November 18, 1985, on Def Jam Recordings in the United States,<sup>[24]</sup> *Radio* earned a significant amount of commercial success and sales for a hip hop record at the time. Shortly after its release, the album sold over 500,000 copies in its first five months, eventually selling over 1 million copies by 1988, according to the Recording Industry Association of America.<sup>[25][26]</sup> *Radio* peaked at number 6 on the Top R&B/Hip-Hop Albums chart and at number 46 on the *Billboard* 200 albums chart.<sup>[27]</sup> It entered the Top R&B/Hip-Hop Albums chart on December 28, 1985, and remained there for 47 weeks, while also entering the Pop Albums chart on January 11, 1986,<sup>[27]</sup> remaining on that chart for thirty-eight weeks.<sup>[27]</sup> By 1989, the album had earned platinum status from the Recording Industry Association of America (RIAA), with sales exceeding one million copies; it had previously earned a gold certification in the United States on April 14, 1986.<sup>[28]</sup> "I Can't Live Without My Radio" and "Rock the Bells" were singles that helped the album go platinum. It eventually reached 1,500,000 copies sold in the US.<sup>[28]</sup>

With the breakthrough success of his hit single "I Need a Beat" and the *Radio LP*, LL Cool J became one of the early hip-hop acts to achieve mainstream success along with Kurtis Blow and Run-D.M.C. Gigs at larger venues were offered to LL as he would join the 1986-'87 *Raising Hell* tour, opening for Run-D.M.C. and the Beastie Boys.<sup>[29]</sup> Another milestone of LL's popularity was



his appearance on *American Bandstand* as the first hip hop act on the show,<sup>[30]</sup> as well as an appearance on Diana Ross' 1987 television special, *Red Hot Rhythm & Blues*.

The album's success also helped in contributing to Rick Rubin's credibility and repertoire as a record producer. *Radio*, along with *Raising Hell* (1986) and *Licensed to Ill* (1986), would form a trilogy of New York City-based, Rubin-headed albums that helped to diversify hip-hop.<sup>[31][32]</sup> Rubin's production credit on the back cover reads "REDUCED BY RICK RUBIN", referring to his minimalist production style, which gave the album its stripped-down and gritty sound. This style would serve as one of Rubin's production trademarks and would have a great impact on future hip-hop productions.<sup>[33]</sup> Rubin's early hip hop production work, before his exit from Def Jam to Los Angeles, helped solidify his legacy as a hip hop pioneer and establish his reputation in the music industry.<sup>[33]</sup>

1987–1993: Breakthrough and success  [edit]

LL Cool J's second album was 1987's *Bigger and Deffer*, which was produced by DJ Pooh and the L.A. Posse.<sup>[34]</sup> This stands as one of his biggest-selling career albums, having sold in excess of two million copies in the United States alone.<sup>[35]</sup> It spent 11 weeks at No. 1 on *Billboard*'s R&B albums chart. It also reached No. 3 on the *Billboard*'s Pop albums chart. The album featured the singles "I'm Bad", the revolutionary "I Need Love" – LL's first #1 R&B and Top 40 hit, "Kanday", "Bristol Hotel", and "Go Cut Creator Go". While *Bigger and Deffer*, which was a big success, was produced by the L.A. Posse (at the time consisting of Dwayne Simon, Darryl Pierce and, according to himself the most important for crafting the sound of the LP, Bobby "Bobcat" Ervin), Dwayne Simon was the only one left willing to work on producing LL Cool J's third album *Walking with a Panther*.<sup>[36]</sup> Released in 1989, the album was a commercial success with several charting singles ("Going Back to Cali," which had originally been released on the 1987 movie soundtrack *Less Than Zero*, "I'm That Type of Guy," "Big Ole Butt," and "One Shot at Love"). Despite commercial appeal, the album was often criticized by the hip-hop community as being too commercial and materialistic, and for focusing too much on love ballads.<sup>[37]</sup> As a result, his audience base began to decline due to the album's bold commercial and pop aspirations.<sup>[38]</sup> According to *Billboard*, the album peaked at No. 6 on the *Billboard* 200 and was LL Cool J's second #1 R&B Album where it spent five weeks.

In 1990, LL released *Mama Said Knock You Out*, his fourth studio album. The Marley Marl produced album received critical acclaim and eventually went double Platinum, selling over two million copies according to the RIAA. *Mama Said Knock You Out* marked a turning point in LL Cool J's career, as he proved to critics his ability to stay relevant and hard-edged despite the misgivings of his previous album.<sup>[39]</sup> LL won a Grammy Award for Best Rap Solo Performance in 1992 for the title track. The album's immense success propelled *Mama Said Knock You Out* to be LL's top selling album of his career (as of 2002) and solidified his status as a hip-hop icon. LL also recorded a rap solo for Michael Jackson's demo of "Serious Effect" that remains unreleased but leaked online.<sup>[40]</sup>

1993–2005: Continued success and career prominence  [edit]



LL Cool J in 1999

After acting in *The Hard Way* and *Toys*, LL Cool J released *14 Shots to the Dome*. The album had four singles ("How I'm Comin'", "Back Seat (of My Jeep)", "Pink Cookies in a Plastic Bag Getting Crushed by Buildings", "Stand By Your Man") and guest-featured labelmates Lords of the Underground on "NFA-No Frontin' Allowed". The album went gold.

LL Cool J starred in *In the House*, an NBC sitcom, before releasing *Mr. Smith* (1995), which went on to sell over two million copies. Its singles included "Doin' It" and "Loungin'". Another of the album's singles, "Hey Lover", featured Boyz II Men, and sampled Michael Jackson's "The Lady in My Life"; it eventually became an early hip-hop music video to air on VH1.<sup>[citation needed]</sup> The song also earned him a Grammy Award. Yet another single from the album, "I Shot Ya Remix", included debut vocal work by Foxy Brown. In 1996, Der Jam released this "greatest hits" package, offering a good summary of Cool J's career, from the relentless minimalism of early hits such as "Rock the Bells" to the smooth-talking braggadocio that followed. Classic albums including *Bigger and Deffer* and *Mama Said Knock You Out* are well represented here. In December 1996 his loose cover of the Rufus and Chaka Khan song "Ain't Nobody" was included on the *Beavis and Butt-Head Do America* soundtrack & released as a single. LL Cool J's interpretation of "Ain't Nobody" was particularly successful in the United Kingdom, where it topped the UK Singles Chart in early-1997.<sup>[39]</sup> In that same year, he released the album *Phenomenon*. The singles included "Phenomenon" and "Father". The official second single from *Phenomenon* was "4, 3, 2, 1", which featured Method Man, Redman & Master P and introduced DMX and Canibus.

In 2000, LL Cool J released the album *G.O.A.T.*, which stood for the "Greatest of All Time." It debuted at number one on the *Billboard* album charts,<sup>[40]</sup> and went platinum. LL Cool J thanked Canibus in the liner notes of the album, "for the inspiration". LL Cool J's next album *10* from 2002, was his 9th studio (10th overall including his greatest hits compilation *All World*), and included the singles "Paradise" (featuring Ameriic), and the number 1 R&B hit "Luv U Better", produced by the Neptunes. Later pressings of the album added the 2003 Jennifer Lopez duet, "All I Have". The album reached platinum status. LL Cool J's tenth album *The Definition* was released on August 31, 2004. The album debuted at No. 4 on the *Billboard* charts. Production came from Timbaland, 7 Aurelius, R. Kelly, and others. The lead single was the Timbaland-produced "Headsprung", which peaked at No. 7 on the Hip-Hop and R&B singles chart, and No. 16 on the *Billboard* Hot 100. The second single was the 7 Aurelius-produced, "Hush", which peaked at No. 14 on the *Billboard* Hip-Hop and R&B chart and No. 26 on the Hot 100.

2006–2012: *Exit 13* and touring  [edit]

LL Cool J's 11th album, *Todd Smith*, was released on April 11, 2006. It includes collaborations with 112, Ginuwine, Juelz Santana, Teairra Mari and Freeway. The first single was the Jermaine Dupri-produced "Control Myself" featuring Jennifer Lopez. They shot the video for "Control Myself" on January 2, 2006 at Sony Studios, New York. The second video, directed by Hype Williams, was "Freeze" featuring Lyfe Jennings.

In July 2006, LL Cool J announced details about his final album with Def Jam Recordings, the only label he has ever been signed to. The album is titled *Exit 13*. The album was originally scheduled to be executively produced by fellow Queens rapper 50 Cent.<sup>[41]</sup> *Exit 13* was originally slated for a fall 2006 release, however, after a 2-year delay, it was released September 9, 2008 without 50 Cent as the executive producer. Tracks that the two worked on were leaked to the internet and some of the tracks produced with 50 made it to *Exit 13*. LL Cool J partnered with DJ Kay Slay to release a mixtape called "The Return of the G.O.A.T." It was the first mixtape of his 24-year career and includes freestyling by LL Cool J in addition to other rappers giving their renditions of his songs. A track entitled "Hi Haterz" was leaked onto the internet on June 1, 2008. The song contains LL Cool J rapping over the instrumental to Maino's "I'll Hater". He toured with Janet Jackson on her Rock Witchu tour, only playing in Los Angeles, Chicago, Toronto, and Kansas City.

In September 2009, LL Cool J released a song about the *NCIS* TV series. It is a single and is available on iTunes. The new track is based on his experiences playing special agent Sam Hanna. "This song is the musical interpretation of what I felt after meeting with NCIS agents, experienced Marines and Navy SEALs," LL Cool J said. "It represents the collective energy in the room. I was so inspired I wrote the song on set."<sup>[42]</sup>

In March 2011 at South by Southwest, LL Cool J was revealed to be Z-Trip's special guest at the Red Bull Thre3Style showcase. This marked the beginning of a creative collaboration between the rap and DJ superstars. The two took part in an interview with Carson Daly where they discussed their partnership.<sup>[43]</sup> Both artists have promised future collaborations down the road, with LL Cool J calling the duo "organic".<sup>[44]</sup> One early track to feature LL's talents was Z-Trip's remix of British rock act Kasabian's single "Days Are Forgotten", which was named by influential DJ Zane Lowe as his "Hottest Record in The World".<sup>[45]</sup> and received a favorable reception in both Belgium and the United Kingdom. In January 2012, the pair released the track "Super Bailer" as a free download to celebrate the New York Giants Super Bowl victory. The two have been touring together since 2011, with future dates planned through 2012 and beyond.

2012–present: *Authentic*, *G.O.A.T. 2* and future projects  [edit]

On October 6, 2012, LL Cool J released a new single from *Authentic Hip-Hop* called "Ratchet". Following that, on November 3, 2012, LL collaborated with Joe and producers Trackmasters with his 2nd single, "Take It".<sup>[citation needed]</sup>

On February 8, 2013, it was announced that the title of LL's upcoming album would be changed from *Authentic Hip-Hop* to *Authentic* with a new release date of April 30, 2013. A new cover was unveiled at the same time.<sup>[46]</sup> At around the same time, it was announced that LL Cool J had collaborated with Van Halen guitarist Eddie Van Halen on two tracks on the album.<sup>[47][48][49]</sup>

On October 16, 2013, the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame announced LL Cool J as a nominee for inclusion in 2014.<sup>[50]</sup>

In October 2014, LL announced that his 14th studio album would be called *G.O.A.T. 2* and would be released in 2015.<sup>[51]</sup> LL stated that "the concept behind the album was to give upcoming artists an opportunity to shine, and put myself in the position where I have to spit bars with some of the hardest rhyimers in the game", however, the album was put on hold. LL Cool J explained the reason for it, saying, "It was good but I didn't feel like it was ready yet."<sup>[52]</sup>

On January 21, 2016, LL received a star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame.<sup>[53]</sup>

In March 2016, LL announced his retirement on social media, but quickly walked back his announcement and indicated that a new album was on the way.<sup>[54]</sup> LL hosted the Grammy Awards Show for five consecutive years, from the 54th Grammy Awards on February 12, 2012, through the 58th Grammy Awards on February 15, 2016.<sup>[citation needed]</sup>



LL Cool J during a 2001 performance in Germany



LL Cool J performing in Wilmington, Delaware in August 2008



In October 2018, LL Cool J was nominated for the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame.<sup>[39]</sup> In September 2019, it was announced that LL had re-signed to Def Jam for future album releases.<sup>[39]</sup> His upcoming album will be produced by Q-Tip.<sup>[57]</sup>

On December 29, 2021, LL Cool J canceled his performance at Dick Clark's New Year's Rockin' Eve With Ryan Seacrest 2022 after testing positive for COVID-19.<sup>[58]</sup>

LL hosted the 2022 iHeartRadio Music Awards on March 22, 2022.<sup>[59]</sup>

Acting career  [edit]

While LL Cool J first appeared as a rapper in the movie *Krush Groove* (performing "I Can't Live Without My Radio"),<sup>[60]</sup> his first acting part was a small role in a high school football movie called *Wildcats*.<sup>[61]</sup> He landed the role of Captain Patrick Zevo in Barry Levinson's 1992 film *Toys*.<sup>[62]</sup> From 1995 to 1999, he starred in his own television sitcom *In the House*. He portrayed an ex-Oakland Raiders running back who finds himself in financial difficulties and is forced to rent part of his home out to a single mother and her two children, one of whom moves out with her before the third season.<sup>[63]</sup>

In 1998, LL Cool J played security guard Ronny in *Halloween H20*, the seventh movie in the *Halloween franchise*.<sup>[64]</sup> In 1999, co-starred as Preacher, the chef in the Renny Harlin horror/comedy *Deep Blue Sea*.<sup>[65]</sup> He received positive reviews for his role as Dwayne Giffens, an underworld boss nicknamed "God", in *In Too Deep*.<sup>[66]</sup> Later that year, he starred as Julian Washington—a talented but selfish running back on fictional professional football team the Miami Sharks—in Oliver Stone's drama *Any Given Sunday*. He and co-star Jamie Foxx allegedly got into a real fistfight while filming a fight scene.<sup>[67]</sup> During the next two years, LL Cool J appeared in *Rollerball*,<sup>[68]</sup> *Deliver Us from Eva*,<sup>[69]</sup> *S.W.A.T.*,<sup>[70]</sup> and *Mindhunters*.<sup>[71]</sup>

In 2005, he returned to television in a guest-starring role on the Fox medical drama *House*; he portrayed a death row inmate felled by an unknown disease in an episode entitled "Acceptance". He appeared as Queen Latifah's love interest in the 2006 movie *Last Holiday*.<sup>[72]</sup> He also guest-starred on *30 Rock* in the 2007 episode "The Source Awards", portraying a hip-hop producer called Ridikulous who Tracy Jordan fears may kill him.<sup>[73]</sup> LL Cool J appeared in *Sesame Street*'s 39th season, introducing the word of the day—"Unanimous"—in episode 4169 (September 22, 2008) and performing "The Addition Expedition" in episode 4172 (September 30, 2008).<sup>[74]</sup>

Since 2009, LL Cool J has starred on the CBS police procedural *NCIS: Los Angeles*. The show is a spin-off of *NCIS*, which itself is a spin-off of the naval legal drama *JAG*. LL Cool J portrays NCIS Special Agent Sam Hanna, an ex-Navy SEAL who is fluent in Arabic and is an expert on West Asian culture. The series debuted in autumn of 2009, but the characters were introduced in an April 2009 crossover episode on the parent show.<sup>[75]</sup> In 2013, LL received a Teen Choice Award for Choice TV Actor: Action for his work on the show.<sup>[76]</sup>

In 2013, LL co-starred as a gym owner in the sports dramedy *Grudge Match*.<sup>[77]</sup> Since April 2015, LL has hosted the show *Lip Sync Battle*.<sup>[78]</sup>

Other ventures  [edit]

LL Cool J worked behind the scenes with the mid-1980s hip-hop sportswear line TROOP.<sup>[79]</sup> LL Cool J launched a clothing line (called "Todd Smith").<sup>[80]</sup> The brand produces popular urban apparel. Designs include influences from LL's lyrics and tattoos, as well as from other icons in the hip-hop community.<sup>[81]</sup> LL Cool J has written four books, including 1998's *I Make My Own Rules*, an autobiography cowritten with Karen Hunter. His second book was the children-oriented book called *And The Winner Is...*, published in 2002. In 2006, LL Cool J and his personal trainer, Dave "Scooter" Honig, wrote a fitness book titled *The Platinum Workout*. His fourth book, *LL Cool J (Hip-Hop Stars)* was cowritten in 2007 with hip-hop historian Dustin Shekell and Public Enemy's Chuck D.

LL Cool J starfed his own businesses in the music industry such as the music label in 1993 called P.O.G. (Power Of God) and formed the company *Rock The Bells* to produce music. With the Rock The Bells label, he had artists such as Amyth,<sup>[82]</sup> Smokeman, Naticc, Chantel Jones and Simone Starks. Rock the Bells Records was also responsible for the Deep Blue Sea soundtrack for the 1999 movie of the same name. Rufus "Scola" Waller was also signed to the label, but was released when the label folded.<sup>[83]</sup> LL Cool J founded and launched Boomdizzle.com, a record label / social networking site launched in September 2008. The website accepts music uploads from aspiring artists, primarily from the hip-hop genre, and the site's users rate songs through contests, voting, and other community events.<sup>[84]</sup>

In March 2015, LL Cool J also appeared in an introduction to *WrestleMania 31*.<sup>[85]</sup>

Legacy  [edit]

With the breakthrough success of his hit single "I Need a Beat" and the *Radio* LP, LL Cool J became an early hip-hop act to achieve mainstream success along with Kurtis Blow and Run-DMC. Gigs at larger venues were offered to LL as he would join the 1986-'87 *Raising Hell* tour, opening for Run-D.M.C. and the Beastie Boys.<sup>[29]</sup> Another milestone of LL's popularity was his appearance on *American Bandstand* as the first hip-hop act on the show.<sup>[30]</sup>

The album's success also helped in contributing to Rick Rubin's credibility and repertoire as a record producer. *Radio*, along with *Raising Hell* (1986) and *Licensed to Ill* (1986), would form a trilogy of New York City-based, Rubin-helmed albums that helped to diversify hip-hop.<sup>[31]</sup><sup>[32]</sup> Rubin's production credit on the back cover reads "REDUCED BY RICK RUBIN", referring to his minimalist production style, which gave the album its stripped-down and gritty sound. This style would serve as one of Rubin's production trademarks and would have a great impact on future hip-hop productions.<sup>[33]</sup> Rubin's early hip hop production work, before his exit from Def Jam to Los Angeles, helped solidify his legacy as a hip hop pioneer and establish his reputation in the music industry.<sup>[33]</sup>

*Radio*'s release coincided with the growing new school scene and subculture, which also marked the beginning of hip hop's "golden age" and the replacement of old school hip hop.<sup>[86]</sup> This period of hip hop was marked by the end of the disco rap stylings of old school, which had flourished prior to the mid-1980s, and the rise of a new style featuring "ghetto blasters". *Radio* served as one of the earliest records, along with Run-D.M.C.'s debut album, to combine the vocal approach of hip hop and rapping with the musical arrangements and riffing sound of rock music, pioneering the rap rock hybrid sound.<sup>[87]</sup>

The emerging new-school scene was initially characterized by drum machine-led minimalism, often tinged with elements of rock, as well as boasts about rapping delivered in an aggressive, self-assertive style. In image as in song, the artists projected a tough, cool, street b-boy attitude. These elements contrasted sharply with the 1970s P-Funk and disco-influenced outfits, live bands, synthesizers and party rhymes of acts prevalent in 1984, rendering them old school.<sup>[88]</sup> In contrast to the lengthy, jam-like form predominant throughout early hip hop ("King Tim III", "Rapper's Delight", "The Breaks"), new-school artists tended to compose shorter songs that would be more accessible and had potential for radio play, and conceived more cohesive LPs than their old-school counterparts; the style typified by LL Cool J's *Radio*.<sup>[89]</sup> A leading example of the new school sound is the song "I Can't Live Without My Radio", a loud, defiant declaration of public loyalty to his boom box, which *The New York Times* described as "quintessential rap in its directness, immediacy and assertion of self".<sup>[17]</sup> It was featured in the film *Krush Groove* (1985), which was based on the rise of Def Jam and new school acts such as Run-D.M.C. and the Fat Boys.<sup>[90]</sup>

The energy and *hardcore* delivery and musical style of rapping featured on *Radio*, as well as among other new-school recordings by artists such as Run-D.M.C., Schooly D, T La Rock and Steady B, proved to be influential to hip-hop acts of the "golden age" such as Boogie Down Productions and Public Enemy.<sup>[91]</sup> The decline of the old-school form of hip hop also led to the closing of Sugar Hill Records, one of the labels that helped contribute to early hip hop and that, coincidentally, rejected LL's demo tape.<sup>[92]</sup> As the album served as an example of an expansion of hip-hop music's artistic possibilities, its commercial success and distinct sound soon led to an increase in multi-racial audiences and listeners, adding to the legacy of the album and hip hop as well.<sup>[87]</sup><sup>[93]</sup>

In 2017, LL Cool J became the first rapper to receive Kennedy Center Honors.<sup>[7]</sup>

In 2021, he was inducted into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame with an award for Musical Excellence.<sup>[8]</sup>

Personal life  [edit]

Smith dated Kidada Jones, daughter of producer Quincy Jones, from 1992 to 1994.<sup>[2]</sup> He married Simone Johnson in 1995.<sup>[10]</sup> The couple met in 1987 and have four children.<sup>[94]</sup>

Smith reconciled with his father.<sup>[when?]</sup><sup>[13]</sup><sup>[11]</sup>

In an episode of *Finding Your Roots*, Smith learned that his mother was adopted by Eugene Griffith and Ellen Hightower. The series' genetic genealogist CeCe Moore identified Smith's biological grandparents as Ethel Mae Jolly and Nathaniel Christy Lewis through analysis of his DNA. Smith's biological great-uncle was Hall of Fame boxer John Henry Lewis.<sup>[8]</sup>

Political involvement  [edit]

In 2002, LL Cool J supported George Pataki's bid for a third term as Governor of New York.<sup>[95]</sup> In 2003, LL Cool J spoke at a U.S. Senate Committee hearing on the RIAA lawsuits against Americans distributing or downloading copyrighted music over peer-to-peer networks. He appeared to endorse the RIAA's position, claiming illegal file sharing was hurting his sales and that his session musicians "can't live" due to the lost income. Chuck D provided an opposing viewpoint, saying free file-sharing could be leveraged as a promotional tool and the industry was being overprotective of its copyright.<sup>[96]</sup> He also voiced his support for New York State Senator Malcolm Smith, a Democrat, during an appearance on the senator's local television show.<sup>[97]</sup> he worked with Smith in putting on the annual Jump and Ball Tournament in the rapper's childhood neighborhood of St. Albans, Queens.<sup>[98]</sup> In a February 10, 2012 televised interview with CNN host Piers Morgan, LL Cool J expressed sympathy for President Obama and ascribed negative impressions of his leadership to Republican obstruction designed to "make it look like you have a coordination problem." He was quick to add that no one "should assume that I'm a Democrat either. I'm an Independent, you know?"<sup>[99]</sup> In *LL Cool J's Platinum 360 Diet and Lifestyle*, he included Barack Obama in a list of people he admired, stating that Obama had "accomplished what people thought was impossible."<sup>[100]</sup>



Philanthropy [ edit ]

LL Cool J has his own charitable foundation called Jump & Ball, which is based in his hometown of Queens, New York, and offers an athletic and team-building program for young people. He is also involved in many charitable causes for literacy, music, and arts programs for kids and schools.<sup>[101]</sup>

Discography [ edit ]

*Main article: LL Cool J discography*

Studio albums

- *Radio* (1985)
- *Bigger and Deffer* (1987)
- *Walking with a Panther* (1989)
- *Mama Said Knock You Out* (1990)
- *14 Shots to the Dome* (1993)
- *Mr. Smith* (1995)
- *Phenomenon* (1997)
- *G.O.A.T.* (2000)
- *10* (2002)
- *The DEfinition* (2004)
- *Todd Smith* (2006)
- *Exit 13* (2008)
- *Authentic* (2013)

Filmography [ edit ]

Year	Title	Role	Notes
1985	<i>Krush Groove</i>	Himself	In this Dutch TV documentary LL Cool J is one of many hip-hop artists interviewed. He was very young at time of recording, and still lived at his grandmother's house.
1986	<i>Big Fun In The Big Town</i>		
	<i>Wildcats</i>	Rapper	
1991	<i>The Hard Way</i>	Detective Billy	
1992	<i>Toys</i>	Captain Patrick Zevo	
1993	<i>The Adventures of Pete &amp; Pete</i>	Pete's Teacher	
1995	<i>Out-of-Sync</i>	Jason St. Julian	
1995–1999	<i>In the House</i>	Marlon Hill	
1997	<i>B*A*P*S</i>	Himself	
1998	<i>Caught Up</i>	Roger	
	<i>All That</i>	Himself	
	<i>Oz</i>	Jiggy Walker	
	<i>Woo</i>	Darryl	
	<i>Halloween H20: 20 Years Later</i>	Ronny Jones	
1999	<i>Deep Blue Sea</i>	Sherman 'Preacher' Dudley	
	<i>In Too Deep</i>	Dwayne Keith 'God' Gittens	
	<i>Any Given Sunday</i>	Julian 'J-Man' Washington	
2000	<i>Charlie's Angels</i>	Mr. Jones	
2001	<i>Kingdom Come</i>	Ray Bud Slocumb	
2002	<i>Rollerball</i>	Marcus Ridley	
2002	<i>WWE SmackDown</i>	Himself	
2003	<i>Deliver Us from Eva</i>	Ray Adams	
	<i>S.W.A.T.</i>	Officer Deacon 'Deke' Kaye	
2004	<i>Mindhunters</i>	Gabe Jensen	
	<i>Edison</i>	Officer Rafe Deed	
2005	<i>Slow Burn</i>	Luther Pinks	
	<i>House</i>	Clarence	Episode: "Acceptance" (Season 2, episode 1)
2006	<i>Last Holiday</i>	Sean Williams	
2007	<i>The Man</i>	Manny Baxter	
	<i>30 Rock</i>	Ridikolus	
2008	<i>The Deal</i>	Bobby Mason	
2008	<i>Sesame Street</i>	Himself	2 episodes
	<i>WWII in HD</i>	Shelby Westbrook <sup><span>[</span><span><span></span></span><span>102]</span></sup>	Voice
2009	<i>NCIS</i>	Special Agent Sam Hanna <sup><span>[</span><span><span></span></span><span>103]</span></sup>	2 episodes: "Legend: Part 1 & 2" (Season 6, episode 22 & 23)
	<i>NCIS: Los Angeles</i>		302 episodes
2009–2011	<i>The Electric Company</i>	Himself	Recurring
2012	<i>Hawaii Five-0</i>	Special Agent Sam Hanna	Crossover episode: "Pa Make Loa"
	<i>54th Annual Grammy Awards</i>	Host	TV Special
2013	<i>55th Annual Grammy Awards</i>	Host	TV Special
	<i>Grudge Match</i>		
2014	<i>56th Annual Grammy Awards</i>		
2015	<i>57th Annual Grammy Awards</i>		
2015–2019	<i>Lip Sync Battle</i> <sup><span>[</span><span><span></span></span><span>104]</span></sup>	Host	TV Series on Spike
2016	<i>58th Annual Grammy Awards</i>		TV Special
2017	<i>American Dad!</i>	Sam Hanna	

2022	<i>iHeartRadio Music Awards</i>	Host <sup>[105]</sup>	TV Special
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Awards and nominations [[edit](#)]

Music [[edit](#)]

Grammy Awards [[edit](#)]

Year	Nominated work	Award	Result	Ref
1989	"Going Back To Cali"	Best Rap Performance	Nominated	<sup>[106]</sup>
1992	"Mama Said Knock You Out"	Best Rap Solo Performance	Won	<sup>[107]</sup>
1993	"Strictly Business"		Nominated	<sup>[108]</sup>
1994	"Stand By Your Man"		Nominated	<sup>[109]</sup>
1997	"Hey Lover"		Won	<sup>[110]</sup>
1997	<i>Mr. Smith</i>	Best Rap Album	Nominated	<sup>[110]</sup>
1998	"Ain't Nobody"	Best Rap Solo Performance	Nominated	<sup>[111]</sup>
2004	"Luv U Better"	Best Rap/Sung Collaboration	Nominated	<sup>[112]</sup>
2005	<i>The DEFinition</i>	Best Rap Album	Nominated	<sup>[113]</sup>

MTV Video Music Awards [[edit](#)]

Year	Nominated work	Award	Result	Ref
1991	<i>"Mama Said Knock You Out"</i>	Best Rap Video	Won	<sup>[114]</sup>
		Best Cinematography in a Video	Nominated	<sup>[114]</sup>
1996	<i>"Do'n' It"</i>	Best Rap Video	Nominated	<sup>[115]</sup>
1997	Lifetime Achievement	Michael Jackson Video Vanguard Award	Won	<sup>[116]</sup>

NAACP Image Awards [[edit](#)]

Year	Nominated Work	Category	Result	Ref
1996	<i>Mr. Smith</i>	Best Rap Artist	Won	<sup>[117]</sup>
1997	<i>Phenomenon</i>	Best Rap Artist	Won	
2001	G.O.A.T.	Outstanding Hip-Hop/Rap Artist	Won	<sup>[118]</sup>
2003	<i>10</i>	Outstanding Male Artist	Won	<sup>[119]</sup>

Soul Train Music Awards [[edit](#)]

Year	Nominated Work	Category	Result	Ref
1987	<i>Radio</i>	Best Rap Album	Nominated	<sup>[120]</sup>
1988	<i>Bigger and Deffer</i>	Best Rap Album	Won	<sup>[121]</sup>
	<i>"I Need Love"</i>	Best Rap Single	Won	<sup>[122]</sup>
1991	<i>Mama Said Knock You Out</i>	Best Rap Album	Nominated	<sup>[123]</sup>
	<i>10</i>	Best R&B/Soul or Rap Album of the Year	Nominated	<sup>[124]</sup>
2003	Outstanding Career Achievements in the Field of Entertainment	Quincy Jones Award	Won	<sup>[125]</sup>
2005	<i>"Headsprung"</i>	Best R&B/Soul or Rap Dance Cut	Nominated	<sup>[126]</sup>

Other honors and awards [[edit](#)]

- 1988 – Enstooled as **Kwasi Achi-Bru**, a chieftain of the Akan people, in Abidjan, Ivory Coast
- 1991 – Billboard Top Rap Singles Artist<sup>[127]</sup>
- 1997 – Patrick Lippert Award, Rock The Vote<sup>[128]</sup>
- 2003 – Source Foundation Image Award, for *"his community work"*
- 2007 – Long Island Music Hall of Fame, Inducted as part of the Inaugural Class of Inductees for his contribution to Long Island's rich musical heritage<sup>[129]</sup>
- 2011 – BET Hip Hop Awards, Honored with the **I Am Hip Hop Award** for his contributions to hip-hop culture<sup>[130]</sup>
- 2013 – A New York City double decker tour bus was dedicated to LL Cool J and his life's work<sup>[131]</sup>
- 2014 – Honorary Doctor of Arts, Northeastern University, for his contributions to hip-hop culture<sup>[132]</sup>
- 2016 – LL Cool J was awarded a star on the Hollywood Walk Of Fame.<sup>[133]</sup>
- 2017 – first hip hop artist to receive a Kennedy Center Honor
- LL Cool J has been nominated six times for induction into The Rock and Roll Hall Of Fame. He has been nominated in 2010, 2011, 2014, 2018, 2019, and 2021 as a performer.<sup>[134]</sup> In 2021, He was inducted into The Rock and Roll Hall of Fame with an award for Musical Excellence.<sup>[39]</sup>

Acting [[edit](#)]

Year	Award	Category	Work	Result	Ref
1996	NAACP Image Awards	Outstanding Lead Actor in a Comedy Series	<i>In the House</i>	Nominated	<sup>[117]</sup>
1997	Kids' Choice Awards	Favorite Television Actor		Nominated	<sup>[citation needed]</sup>
1998	NAACP Image Awards	Outstanding Lead Actor in a Comedy Series	<i>Deep Blue Sea</i>	Nominated	<sup>[135]</sup>
		Outstanding Supporting Actor in a Motion Picture		Nominated	<sup>[136]</sup>
2000	Blockbuster Entertainment Award	Favorite Supporting Actor – Action		Won	<sup>[137]</sup>
2004	Black Reel Awards	Best Actor	<i>Deliver Us from Eva</i>	Nominated	<sup>[138]</sup>
2006	Teen Choice Awards	Award for Choice Movie: Liplock (shared with Queen Latifah)	<i>Last Holiday</i>	Nominated	<sup>[139]</sup>
2011	NAACP Image Awards	Outstanding Actor in a Drama Series	<i>NCIS: Los Angeles</i>	Won	<sup>[140]</sup>
	Teen Choice Awards	Choice TV Actor: Action		Nominated	<sup>[141]</sup>
	NAACP Image Awards	Outstanding Actor in a Drama Series		Won	<sup>[142]</sup>
2012	Teen Choice Awards	Choice TV Actor: Action		Nominated	<sup>[143]</sup>
	Primetime Emmy Awards	Outstanding Special Class Programs	<i>The 54th Annual Grammy Awards</i>	Nominated	<sup>[144]</sup>



2013	NAACP Image Awards	Outstanding Actor in a Drama Series	NCIS: Los Angeles	Won	[145]
	Teen Choice Awards	Choice TV Actor: Action		Won	[146]
2014	NAACP Image Awards	Outstanding Actor in a Drama Series		Won	[147]
	Prism Awards	Male Performance in a Drama Series Multi-Episode Storyline		Nominated	[148]
2015	NAACP Image Awards	Outstanding Actor in a Drama Series	Lip Sync Battle	Nominated	[149]
		Outstanding Actor in a Drama Series		Nominated	[150]
2016	Primetime Emmy Awards	Outstanding Structured Reality Program	NCIS: Los Angeles	Nominated	[151]
	People's Choice Awards	Favorite TV Crime Drama Actor	NCIS: Los Angeles	Nominated	[152]
		Favorite TV Crime Drama Actor		Nominated	[153]

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L.L. Cool J was born James Todd Smith on January 14, 1968, in Bay Shore, Long Island, New York, the son of Ondrea Griffith and James Louis Smith, Jr. Todd, as he was called, did not have a very happy childhood. At the age of four, he saw his mother and grandfather shot by his own father. After they recovered from their injuries, his mother began ... See full bio »


Born: January 14, 1968 in Bay Shore, Long Island, New York, USA

More at IMDbPro »

Contact Info: View agent, publicist, legal on IMDbPro


Nominated for 4 Primetime Emmys. Another 17 wins & 40 nominations. See more awards »

Photos




603 photos | 65 videos »


Known For




Deep Blue Sea  
Preacher  
(1999)



Mindhunters  
Gabe Jensen  
(2004)



Halloween H20: 20 Year...  
Ronny  
(1998)



Deliver Us from Eva  
Raymond 'Ray' Adams  
(2003)

Filmography

Jump to: Actor · Producer · Additional Crew · Soundtrack · Composer · Music department · Writer · Thanks · Self · Archive footage

Show all Show by... Edit

Actor (72 credits) Hide

NCIS: Los Angeles (TV Series)

2009-2022

Sam Hanna

- Come Together (2022) ... Sam Hanna

- Down the Rabbit Hole (2022) ... Sam Hanna

- Work & Family (2022) ... Sam Hanna

- Live Free or Die Standing (2022) ... Sam Hanna

- Hard for the Money (2022) ... Sam Hanna

Show all 302 episodes

Lip Sync Battle: It Takes Two (Music Video)

2019

LL Cool J

American Dad! (TV Series)

2017

Sam Hanna

- Casino Normale (2017) ... Sam Hanna (voice)

LL Cool J Feat. Mavado: The Hustler (Music Video short)

2014

LL Cool J

Grudge Match

2013

Frankie Brite

LL Cool J Feat. Joe: Take It (Music Video)

2012

James Todd Smith

Hawaii Five-0 (TV Series)

2012

Sam Hanna

- Pa Make Loa (2012) ... Sam Hanna

Mindless Behavior Feat. Diggy Simmons: Mrs. Right (Music Video)

2011

Geography Teacher

Artists for Haiti: We Are the World 25 for Haiti (Music Video short)

2010

LL Cool J

NCIS (TV Series)

2009

Sam Hanna

- Legend: Part 2 (2009) ... Sam Hanna

- Legend: Part 1 (2009) ... Sam Hanna

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<b>The Deal</b> Bobby Mason	2008/1
<b>The Man</b> (TV Movie) Manny Baxter	2007
<b>30 Rock</b> (TV Series) Ridikolus - The Source Awards (2007) ... Ridikolus	2007
<b>LL Cool J Feat. Jennifer Lopez: Control Myself</b> (Music Video) LL Cool J	2006
<b>Last Holiday</b> Sean Williams	2006
<b>House</b> (TV Series) Clarence - Acceptance (2005) ... Clarence	2005
<b>Slow Burn</b> Luther Pinks (as James Todd Smith)	2005
<b>Edison</b> Deed	2005
<b>Mindhunters</b> Gabe Jensen (as James Todd Smith aka LL Cool J)	2004
<b>S.W.A.T.</b> Deacon 'Deke' Kaye (as James Todd Smith aka LL Cool J)	2003
<b>Deliver Us from Eva</b> Raymond 'Ray' Adams (as James Todd Smith aka LL Cool J)	2003
<b>Jennifer Lopez Feat. LL Cool J: All I Have</b> (Music Video) LL Cool J	2003
<b>LL Cool J Feat. Amerie: Paradise</b> (Music Video) LL Cool J	2002
<b>Rollerball</b> Marcus Ridley	2002
<b>Missy Elliott: Get Ur Freak On</b> (Music Video) LL Cool J (uncredited)	2001
<b>Kingdom Come</b> Ray Bud Slocumb	2001
<b>Charlie's Angels</b> Mr. Jones	2000
<b>Sisqó: Thung Song</b> (Music Video) LL Cool J	2000
<b>Any Given Sunday</b> Julian Washington	1999
<b>Deep Blue Sea: Deleted Scenes</b> (Video short) Preacher	1999
<b>LL Cool J: Shut 'Em Down</b> (Music Video) LL Cool J	1999
<b>In Too Deep</b> Dwayne Gittens (God)	1999
<b>In the House</b> (TV Series) Marion Hill / Self - Out the House (1999) ... Marion Hill - Guest Dad (1999) ... Marion Hill - Cornbread, Marion and Me (1999) ... Marion Hill - How Nana Got Her Groove Back (1999) ... Marion Hill - There's Something About Tiffany (1999) ... Marion Hill Show all 76 episodes	1995-1999
<b>Deep Blue Sea</b> Preacher	1999
<b>LL Cool J: Deepest Bluest (Shark's Fin)</b> (Music Video) LL Cool J	1999
<b>Dr. Dre Feat. LL Cool J: Zoom</b> (Music Video) LL Cool J	1998
<b>LSG feat. LL Cool J, Busta Rhymes &amp; MC Lyte: Curious</b> (Music Video) LL Cool J	1998
<b>Oz</b> (TV Series) Jiggy Walker - Strange Bedfellows (1998) ... Jiggy Walker	1998
<b>Halloween H20: 20 Years Later</b> Ronny	1998
<b>Woo</b> Darryl	1998
<b>Caught Up</b> Roger	1998
<b>LL Cool J: Phenomenon</b> (Music Video) LL Cool J	1997
<b>LL Cool J feat. Method Man, Redman &amp; DMX: 4, 3, 2, 1</b> (Music Video) LL Cool J	1997
<b>B*A*P*S</b> LL Cool J	1997
<b>Touch</b> LL Cool J	1997
<b>B Real, Busta Rhymes, Coolio, LL Cool J &amp; Method Man: Hit 'Em High (The Monstars' Anthem)</b> (Music Video) LL Cool J	1996
<b>LL Cool J: Ain't Nobody</b> (Music Video) LL Cool J	1996
<b>Babyface Feat. LL Cool J, Howard Hewett, Jody Watley &amp; Jeffrey Daniel: This Is for the Lover in You</b> (Music Video) LL Cool J	1996
<b>LL Cool J: Doin' It</b> (Music Video) LL Cool J	1996
<b>LL Cool J Feat. Boyz II Men: Hey Lover</b> (Music Video) LL Cool J	1996
<b>The Right to Remain Silent</b> (TV Movie) Charles Red Taylor	1996

NCIS: Los Angeles  
Provenance (S11, Ep5)  
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<b>Eyes on Hip Hop</b> (Video) Rapper	1995
<b>LL Cool J Feat. Keith Murray, Prodigy, Fat Joe &amp; Foxy Brown: I Shut Ya! (Remix)</b> (Music Video) LL Cool J	1995
<b>Out-of-Sync</b> Jason St. Julian	1995
<b>The Adventures of Pete &amp; Pete</b> (TV Series) Mr. Throneberry - Sick Day (1994) ... Mr. Throneberry	1994
<b>Craig Mack Feat. Busta Rhymes, LL Cool J, the Notorious B.I.G., &amp; Rampage: Flava in Ya Ear: Remix</b> (Music Video) LL Cool J	1994
<b>LL Cool J: Pink Cookies in a Plastic Bag Getting Crushed by Buildings</b> (Music Video) LL Cool J	1993
<b>Toys</b> Captain Patrick Zevo	1992
<b>LL Cool J: Mama Said Knock You Out</b> (Music Video) LL Cool J	1991
<b>The Hard Way</b> Billy	1991
<b>LL Cool J: Around the Way Girl</b> (Music Video) LL Cool J	1990
<b>LL Cool J: The Boomin' System</b> (Music Video) LL Cool J	1990
<b>Kid 'n Play: Funhouse</b> (Music Video) LL Cool J	1990
<b>LL Cool J: Jangling Baby</b> (Music Video) LL Cool J	1990
<b>LL Cool J: Big Ole Butt</b> (Music Video) LL Cool J	1989
<b>Spirit of the Forest: Spirit of the Forest</b> (Music Video) LL Cool J	1989
<b>LL Cool J: I'm That Type of Guy</b> (Music Video) LL Cool J	1989
<b>LL Cool J: Going Back to Cali</b> (Music Video) LL Cool J	1989
<b>LL Cool J: I Need Love</b> (Music Video) LL Cool J	1987
<b>LL Cool J: I'm Bad</b> (Music Video) LL Cool J	1987
<b>Beastie Boys: (You Gotta) Fight for Your Right (to Party!)</b> (Music Video) LL Cool J	1986
<b>Wildcats</b> Rapper (as L.L. Cool J)	1986
<b>Producer</b> (5 credits) <a href="#">Show</a>	
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Alternate Names: [James Todd Smith aka LL Cool J](#) | [L.L. Cool J](#) | [James Todd Smith](#)

Height: [6' 3" \(1.91 m\)](#)

Spouse: [Simone Smith](#) ([4 children](#))

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Personal Quote: [I don't think you should go around talking trash about people because I think that's how you get your hat handed to you. I'm good at what I do, but I wouldn't be](#)



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so bold and arrogant as to say something disrespectful about, say, Eminem. He's talented and he's good at what he does. [See more »](#)

Trivia: Homaged/satirized in *Sonic Youth's* song "Kool Thing" (from the 1990 album "Goo"). [See more »](#)

Trademark: Always wears a hat or a beanie when off-camera [See more »](#)















Nickname: The Future of the Funk [See more »](#)

Star Sign: Capricorn

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DON'T CALL IT A COMEBACK. I'VE BEEN HERE FOR YEARS<sup>SM</sup>

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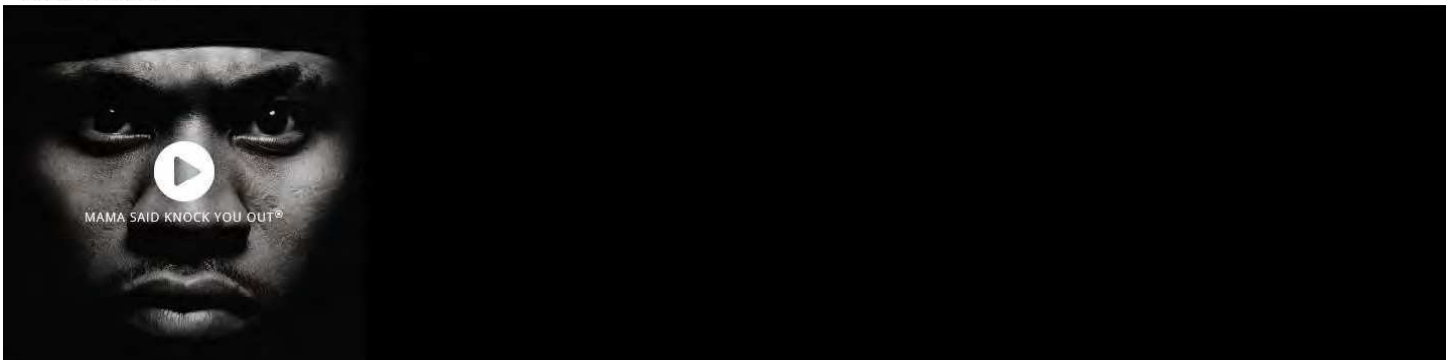
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Virginia Prieto  
That's awesome, can me and my husband join you guys, he just retired. Have a wonderful time. Love your movies. 🙌🙌🙌🙌

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LL COOL J  
July 5 at 3:41 PM · 🌐

Good read... <https://www.billboard.com/.../bob-dylan-song-auction-t.../>



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Frank Harmon  
For a whole record 1 million seems like I get more money than that I don't know how it works


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LL COOL J  
July 4 at 12:46 PM · 🌐

#HappyFourth of July!!!

Happy 4th of July!!!



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HAPPY HAPPY 4TH LL COOL J  
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LL COOL J  
June 27 at 2:45 PM · 🌐

A new street sign is now up in New York City. Y'all know where this is?  
s/o to @rockthebells and @jayshells\_ for putting these Rap Quotes signs around NYC to celebrate Black Music Month.  
Can't wait to hit the stage at Rock The Bells Festival on Sat, Aug 6th in Queens, NY. Cop your tickets at [rockthebells.com/festival](https://rockthebells.com/festival) and see y'all there! #RTBFestival



I take site specific rap lyrics and

G Shed music, BronxMama.com and 371 others 146 Comments 66 Shares

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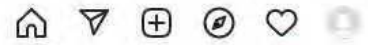
Top fan  
Heather West  
Awesome love I wish I could be there I saw you LL in Vegas it was crazy I jumped on stage with you. I was a fire cracker I love your stuff and style. 🎆  
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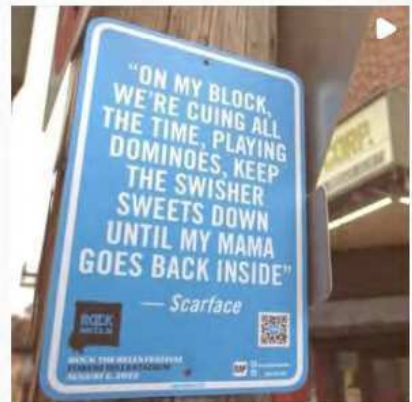
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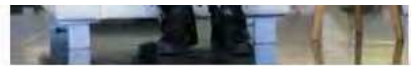
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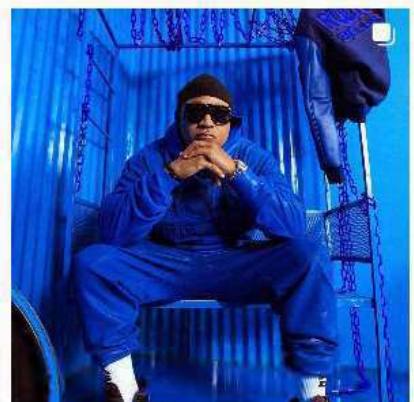
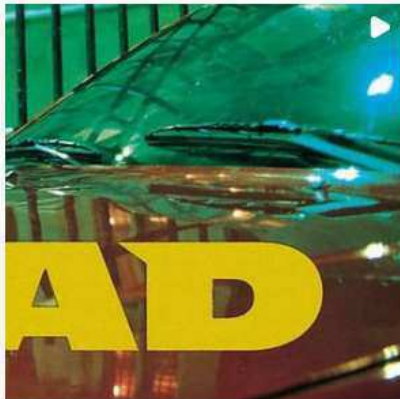
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**LLCOOLJ** @llcoolj · Apr 4

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Featuring: LL COOL J feat. DJ Z-Trip, Ice Cube, Rick Ross, Lil' Kim, The Diplomats and more. To view the whole line-up and register for pre-sale tickets visit: [rockthebells.com/test-val/](https://rockthebells.com/test-val/)

1:56 83.3K views

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**LLCOOLJ** @llcoolj · Jul 7

The Trill Mealz Food Court lineup hosted by Bun B at Rock The Bells Fest... [youtu.be/FICLdnXNS0](https://youtu.be/FICLdnXNS0) via @YouTube

youtube.com

The Trill Mealz Food Court lineup hosted by Bun B ... WORLD PREMIER! The Trill Mealz Food Court hosted by Bun B is coming to Rock The Bells Festival. This i...

0 15 50

**LLCOOLJ** @llcoolj · Jul 5

Good read... [billboard.com/pro/bob-dylan-...](https://billboard.com/pro/bob-dylan-...)

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Alicia Keys  
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 Keys is Out Now || Creator @Keysoniczoo || City Of Gods (Part II) is out now!!  





LLCOOLJ @llcoolj · Jun 28

Big Surprises in store for you at The #RockTheBellsFestival


Rock The Bells @RockTheBells · Jun 27  
 We partnered with artist @jayshells for #RapQuotes: Rock The Bells Festival edition 🎵 The Rap Quote street signs can be found across NYC. The Rock The Bells Festival is going down in Queens, NY at Forest Hills Stadium on 8.6.22 🎵  
 Learn more: [RockTheBells.com/festival](https://RockTheBells.com/festival)



6 35 91


LLCOOLJ @llcoolj · Jun 27

s/o to @rockthefestival and @jayshells for putting these Rap Quotes signs around NYC to celebrate Black Music Month.

Can't wait to hit the stage at Rock The Bells Festival on Aug 6th in Queens, NY. Cop your tickets at [rockthebells.com/festival](https://rockthebells.com/festival) and see y'all there! #RTBFestival



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LLCOOLJ Retweeted


Louis "Uncle Louie" Gregory @UncleLouie · Jun 27  
 #RockTheBells @llcoolj @SIRIUSXM 🎵



4 12 52

**LLCOOLJ** @llcoolj · Jun 24  
Who will win? Find out tonight on the grand finale of Come Dance With Me on @CBSTVStudios at 8/7c. #CDWM

**NEW FRIDAY**

12 10 67

**LLCOOLJ Retweeted**  
**The Universal Hip Hop Museum** @unhmmuseum · Jun 20  
Shoutout to @therealebmcLaughlin for the fresh re-enactment of LL Cool J's 1987 hit song "I'm Bad". Who's ready to do the Wop at [R]Evolution of Hip Hop opening June 28th?  
Make sure to come early, the exhibit will start on time!  
@ealebmcLaughlin @llcoolj @RockTheBells

0:13 10.3K views

6 57 226

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**LLCOOLJ Retweeted**  
**Rosanna Scotto** @rosannascotto · Jun 20  
Coming up at 9 @llcoolj @RockTheBells ...plus @SheilaEdrummer and @mushrooms @FreshCapMstrms @freshcaptiony #gony

4 8 20

**LLCOOLJ** @llcoolj · Jun 19  
Happy Juneteenth. 🇺🇸👏👏

24 84 576

**LLCOOLJ** @llcoolj · Jun 19  
Happy Father's Day fellas. Stay strong. Achieve your goal!

33 80 633

**LLCOOLJ Retweeted**  
**MISTER CEE** @djmistercee · Jun 18  
Thank You To LL Cool J @llcoolj & The Entire Rock The Bells Staff @rockthebells For Hooking Me Up Wit Some Of That "Drip Collection". Make Sure That You Log On To [ROCKTHEBELLS.COM](https://rockthebells.com) To Cop The "Drip Collection" & More!!!

Collection" &amp; More!!!



3 14 86



LLCOOLJ @llcoolj · Jun 17

Down to our final four 🏆 You don't want to miss the all new #COWM episode tonight at 8/7c on @cbs! 📺



17 14 77



LLCOOLJ @llcoolj · Jun 17

Buy your tickets to the @iHeartRadio Music Festival right now at [AXS.com](https://www.axs.com)! See you all there in September #iHeartFestival



20 22 84



LLCOOLJ Retweeted



bishop\_beve @bishop\_beve · Jun 15

Damn that's wild you don't see many movies with black hero's well @llcoolj survived in deep blue sea 🌊 he actually killed the shark 🦈🦈🦈🦈🦈🦈

8 8 55



LLCOOLJ @llcoolj · Jun 15

I'm celebrating the 35th anniversary of 'Bigger and Deffer' on The Pop-Up mode on @pandoramusic's Hip Hop Forever. Listen as I go behind-the-scenes of the album, as well as discuss some of my favorite tracks. Listen now:

[pandora.app.link/dSB2RZpk1q9](https://pandora.app.link/dSB2RZpk1q9)  
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scenes of the album, as well as discuss some of my favorite tracks. Listen

now:

[pandora.app.link/uS82RZuxkqj](https://pandora.app.link/uS82RZuxkqj)

#PandoraMusic



35

26

184

LLCOOLJ Retweeted



@pandoramusic · Jun 11

We're celebrating 35 years of @llcoolj's 'Bigger and Deffer' with The Pop-Up mode on Hip Hop Forever. Listen as he breaks down the making of the project, plus some of his favorite tracks.

Check it out now: [pandora.app.link/uSbsQWnFqgb](https://pandora.app.link/uSbsQWnFqgb)



3

25

101



LLCOOLJ · @llcoolj · Jun 14

Inspiring 🏆 Coming Home: South Africa premieres TONIGHT. Hosted by my friend @djEFN and his crew. Tune in to this eye opening docuseries on @revolttv at 10pm EST. @RockTheBells



0:28 5,701 views

25

41

143



LLCOOLJ · @llcoolj · Jun 12

👍👍👍

Rock The Bells · @RockTheBells · Jun 12

.@MikeTyson been known what's up. Even though there are still a lotta people that don't respect it like they should, the world was forced to pay attention to this force of nature thanks in large part to the men in this video: @LLCOOLJ @FlavorFlav, Mr. Magic, #HipHopIsForever 🙏







19 21 228



LLCOOLJ @llcoolj · Jun 10

Reaching new heights tonight on #CDWMI! Make sure to tune in to @CBS at 8/7c for some family fun!



22 12 70

LLCOOLJ Retweeted



DJ Z-TRIP @ztrip · Jun 7

Catch me and @llcoolj in Vegas for the @iHeartRadio Music Festival!

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LLCOOLJ @llcoolj · Jun 7

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# Exhibit D



# Rap Artist, 'NCIS' Star LL Cool J Receives Walk of Fame Star

The rapper and actor beame the first rap artist to amass 10 consecutive platinum-plus selling albums.

By Jonathan Lloyd • Published January 21, 2016 • Updated on January 21, 2016 at 12:03 pm



Rapper and actor LL Cool J received the 2,571st star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame Thursday, honoring a recording career that made him the first rap artist to amass 10 consecutive platinum-plus selling albums.

The ceremony was a week after his birthday and slightly more than three weeks before he hosts the Grammys for the fifth consecutive year.

"The first word that comes to my mind is gratitude," he said. "I'm so appreciative of this honor."

Queen Latifah and Sean "Diddy" Combs joined him in speaking in the ceremony in front of the Hard Rock Cafe on Hollywood Boulevard.

"If you Wikipedia him, his career says, 'From 1984 to Present,' said Latifah. "That's longevity, stick-to-itiveness, perseverance. Most of all, he lives in our hearts as fans. This was one of the first people I saw with a radio come out on his shoulder that was the same size of the radios that we were carrying around in the 'hood."

Born James Todd Smith on Jan. 14, 1968, in Bay Shore, New York on Long Island and raised in the Hollis neighborhood of Queens, he adopted a stage name meaning Ladies Love Cool James.

LL Cool J began his career in 1984 with Def Jam Records. He is tied for third for most Billboard chart debuts by a rapper. All but one of his 14 albums did not reached Billboard's rhythm and blues/hip-hop chart Top 10.

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"It was like watching a superhero," said Combs. "This guy was just glowing. He had this glow to him, this smile, this charisma. He's been a leading example to all of us."

LL Cool J won Grammys for best rap solo performance in 1991 for "Mama Said Knock You Out" and 1996 for "Hey Lover."

He has also had an extensive acting career and is best known for his role as NCIS Special Agent Sam Hanna on the CBS crime drama "NCIS: Los Angeles." His film credits include "Deep Blue Sea" and "Any Given Sunday."



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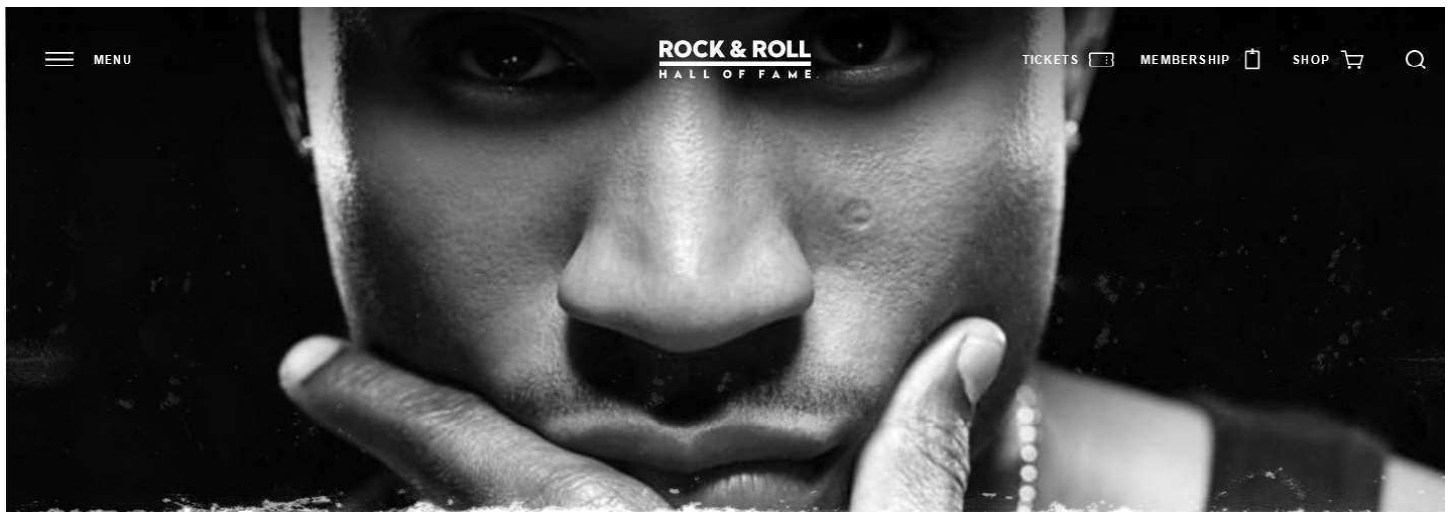
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# LL COOL J

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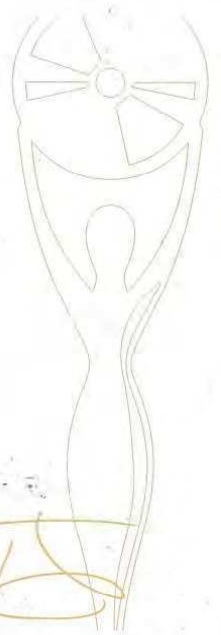
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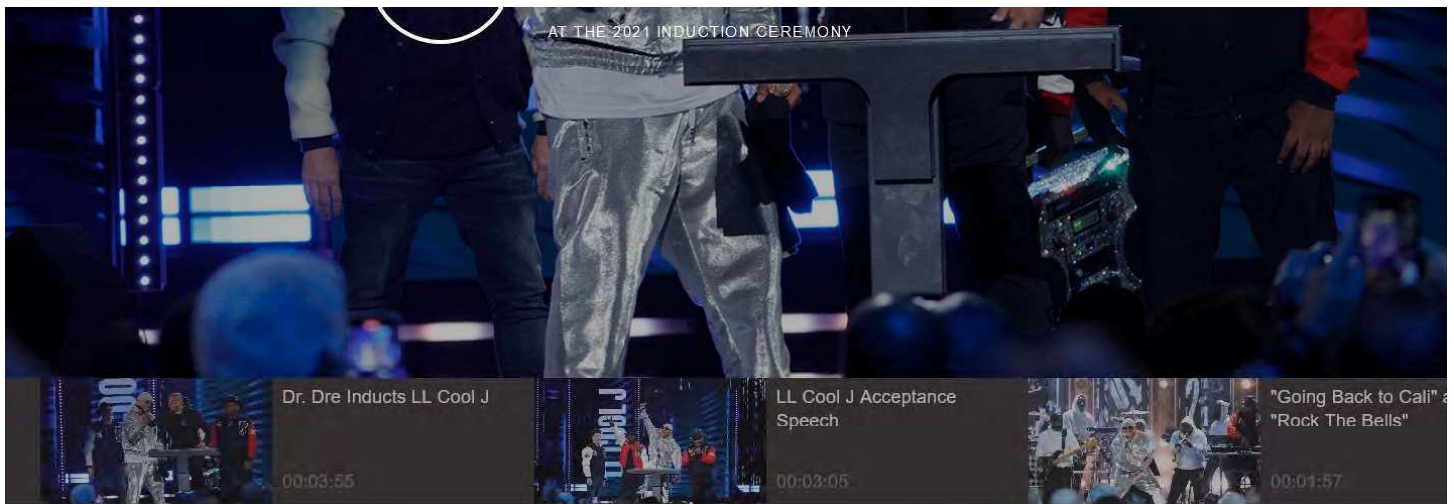


Def Jam records chose a teenager as their face when ushering in hip-hop's second wave, and 17-year-old LL Cool J made an unforgettable impression.



**DR. DRE INDUCTS LL COOL J**





## HALL OF FAME ESSAY



# 2021

**Amy Linden**

"Don't call it a comeback, I been here for years." That opening line from the title track of LL Cool J's fourth album, *Mama Said Knock You Out*, was more than just braggadocio or studio posturing. Those ten words were an instantly iconic and electrifying "I told you so" aimed at sometimey fans and an industry that, five years into a platinum-plus and groundbreaking career, had written LL off as irrelevant. As the explosive success of that song and album would prove, pity the fool that dared to count LL Cool J out.

For more than four decades, rap music has produced a veritable solar system of stars; LL Cool J is one of the most incandescent. He is, to put it simply, foundational. Since 1985, he has recorded a catalogue of classic singles that rock the crowd to this day, including "Doin' It," "Hey Lover," "Around the Way Girl," "I'm Bad," "Rock the Bells," "Going Back to Cali," "4, 3, 2, 1," and "Phenomenon," to name a few. In 2017, LL became the first – and thus far the only – rap artist to receive the prestigious Kennedy Center Honor. He is a two-time Grammy winner, a multiplatinum-selling performer, successful actor, author, and entrepreneur. A fierce battle rapper and razor-sharp wordsmith, LL Cool J is a true child of hip-hop whose music and attitude defined and elevated the culture.




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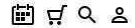
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# 2017 Kennedy Center Honor Recipient LL COOL J to Host 42nd Annual Kennedy Center Honors

America to Celebrate the Artistic Achievements of Earth, Wind & Fire, Sally Field, Linda Ronstadt, and Michael Tilson Thomas on Sunday, December 8, 2019

Program to be broadcast nationally on CBS on Sunday, December 15, 2019



PDF 

(WASHINGTON)—Two-time Grammy Award® winner and 2017 Kennedy Center Honors recipient **LL COOL J** will host the 42nd annual Kennedy Center Honors on Sunday, December 8, 2019. The Honors Gala will be recorded for broadcast on the CBS Television Network for the 42nd year as a two-hour primetime special to air on Sunday, December 15 (8:00–10:00 p.m., ET/PT). This will be LL COOL J's first time hosting the special.

As previously announced, the recipients of the 2019 Kennedy Center Honors will be R&B collective **Earth, Wind & Fire**, actress **Sally Field**, singer **Linda Ronstadt**, children's television program **Sesame Street**, and conductor and musical visionary **Michael Tilson Thomas**. The 42nd annual Kennedy Center Honors marks the first time a television program will receive the award.

In a star-studded celebration on the Kennedy Center Opera House stage on Sunday, December 8, the 2019 Honorees will be saluted by today's leading performers from New York, Hollywood, and the arts capitals of the world, accepting the recognition and gratitude of their peers through performances and tributes.

The Honors recipients are recognized for their lifetime contributions to American culture through the performing arts—whether in dance, music, theater, opera, motion pictures, or television—and are confirmed by the executive committee of the Center's board of trustees. The primary criterion in the selection process is excellence. The Honors are not designated by art form or category of artistic achievement; over the years, the selection process has produced a balance among the various arts and artistic disciplines.

Two-time Grammy Award® winner and six-time NAACP Image Award winner LL COOL J is an entertainment icon who has worked in music, film, television, publishing, fashion, and philanthropy. First introduced to the world in 1984 as a Def Jam Records flagship artist, LL is the first rap artist to amass 10 consecutive platinum-plus selling albums. The multi-platinum artist and two-time Rock and Roll Hall of Fame nominee is currently tied for third place for the most *Billboard* chart debuts by a rapper.

In December 2017, LL became the first rapper to earn a prestigious Kennedy Center Honors, which is one of America's highest achievements for any performer. LL received a star on the legendary Hollywood Walk of Fame in 2016 for his achievement in music.

LL has appeared in more than 30 films and starred opposite acclaimed actors such as Samuel L. Jackson and Colin Farrell in *S.W.A.T.*, Al Pacino, Jamie Foxx and Cameron Diaz in *Any Given Sunday*, and Gabrielle Union in *Deliver Us from Eva*. Other film credits include *Rollerball*, *Charlie's Angels*, *Kingdom Come*, *In Too Deep*, *Toys*, and *Slow Burn* with Ray Liotta. He received a Blockbuster Award for Best Comedic Performance as Chef in Renny Harlin's action film *Deep Blue Sea*. Most recently, LL was seen starring opposite Academy Award® winner Robert De Niro in *Grudge Match*.

LL stars in the hit television drama *NCIS: LOS ANGELES* on CBS. Previously, he had a dramatic and critically acclaimed performance on the second season premiere of *House*, and a comedic guest-starring role on *30 Rock* as Hip Hop mogul Ridikolus. Currently, LL is hosting and executive producing the hit show *Lip Sync Battle* on Paramount Network, which initially premiered April 2015 as Spike TV's most-watched original program ever. The series has amassed more

than half a billion video streams since its launch. In 2018, the show earned its third Emmy® nomination in the category of Outstanding Structured Reality Program and was nominated for a Producers' Guild Award for Producer of the Year Award in Episodic-Competition Television. In 2018, LL won a NAACP Image Award for Outstanding Host in a Reality/Reality Competition, Game Show, or Variety Series or Special.

In March 2018, LL launched his own SiriusXM classic Hip Hop channel entitled *LL COOL J's Rock The Bells Radio*. The channel features a wide range of classic Hip Hop content, music, interviews, and in-depth retrospectives curated and presented by the award-winning artist.

Ricky Kirshner and Glenn Weiss of White Cherry Entertainment will executive produce the special for the fifth consecutive year. Also, Weiss returns as director.

*CBS is the Exclusive Sponsor of the Kennedy Center Honors.*

*Boeing is the Exclusive Underwriter of the 2019 Kennedy Center Honors Gala.*

*Michael and Noémi Neidorff are the Chairs of the Kennedy Center Honors Gala.*

*Delta Air Lines is the Official Airline of the Kennedy Center Honors.*

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## ARTS AND ENTERTAINMENT

# LL Cool J is rap's first Kennedy Center honoree. Here are 5 others they could have picked.



Analysis by [Elahe Izadi](#)  
Staff writer

August 3, 2017 at 1:07 p.m. EDT



LL Cool J during the Grammy Awards on February 15, 2016. (Robyn Beck/AFP/Getty)

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The Kennedy Centers Honors is about as old as hip-hop itself. But until Thursday's announcement that LL Cool J would receive one, the award had never been bestowed upon a rapper.

LL Cool J seems like an odd first choice. He's known more these days for his role on "NCIS: Los Angeles" (on CBS, which is also the Kennedy Center Honor's official sponsor), or his hosting gig on Spike's "Lip Sync Battle," or his five-year run as host of the Grammys (also on CBS). His last track to get a bunch of attention was his collaboration with country's Brad Paisley, "Accidental Racist" (yup, remember that?), off his 2013 album "Authentic."

*[LL Cool J becomes the first rapper to be Kennedy Center Honors recipient]*

By the time the 17-year-old from Queens dropped out of high school to release his first album, 1985's "Radio," hip-hop had already been born. There were DJs such as Kool Herc in the 1970s. Sugar Hill Gang's "Rapper's Delight" — one of the first rap singles — introduced the world to the genre in 1979. The next year, Kurtis Blow became the first true commercial success with "The Breaks."

But LL Cool J — long before he became a charismatic cool guy on TV — was hip-hop's first true superstar. "Bigger and Deffer" catapulted his career in 1987. He displayed a wide range, as the type of guy who could be both battle rapper and a big softy, the emcee who gave us "Rock the

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Bells” and rap’s first ballad, “I Need Love.” He had bigger hits in the 1990s and beyond. More than 30 years after he began, he’s apparently still working on new music.

*[Criticism: The Kennedy Center Honors abandons the arts for pop culture]*

“My late grandmother passed some wise advice to me: ‘If a task is once begun, never leave it ‘til its done. Be thy labor great or small, do it well or not at all.’ That adage has guided everything I have ever done in my life and I couldn’t be more grateful because it has led me here,” he said in a statement about the Kennedy Centers Honors. “To be the first rap artist honored by the Kennedy Center is beyond anything I could have imagined. I dedicate this honor to the Hip Hop artists who came before me and those who came after me. This simply proves that dreams don’t have deadlines. God is great.”

LL Cool J also stands out as the youngest recipient, tying with Stevie Wonder, who was also 49 at the time he was recognized.

Artists are recognized “for their lifetime contributions to American culture through the performing arts,” reads a news release, and the “primary criterion in the selection process is excellence. Honorees were recommended by the Center’s Special Honors Advisory Committee, and past recipients. The winners are confirmed by the center’s Board of Trustees executive committee.”

So, now that the seal has been broken, who could be next? (Keep in mind they aren’t awarded posthumously.) Here’s a list of those worthy of consideration:



Run-DMC at the Grammy Awards in 1988. (Mark Lennihan/AP)

## Run-DMC

Considered one of the founding fathers of hip-hop, the trio revolutionized the musical landscape with 1986’s “Walk this Way.” [The Post’s Geoff Edgers wrote about that moment:](#)

It’s 1986. Rap music is explosive and on the rise but still misunderstood and barely represented in the mainstream. The leading innovators are Run-DMC, a trio from Queens who sport black leather jackets and unlaced Adidas sneakers. Two albums into their career, Joseph “Run” Simmons, Darryl “DMC” McDaniels and Jason “Jam Master Jay” Mizell are already minor stars and musical revolutionaries.

Their third album, “Raising Hell,” was a massive commercial success

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and solidified hip-hop's place as not just a passing fad. They would go on to put out four more albums. (Jam Master Jay was murdered in 2002.)



Queen Latifah in 2007. (Ethan Miller/Getty Images)

## Queen Latifah

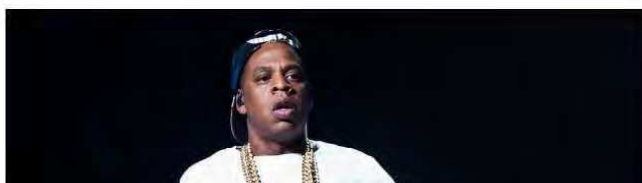
Like LL Cool J, Queen Latifah is known more these days for her acting than rapping chops. But unlike LL, she's won acting Golden Globe and Emmy awards, and an Oscar nomination. She also helped pave the way for other female rappers, and showed early on that she could make the transition from music to all-around entertainer, with her groundbreaking sitcom, "Living Single."



Dr. Dre in 2010. (Adam Hunger/Reuters)

## Dr. Dre

You could easily argue that without Compton's Dr. Dre, a rapper and even more prolific producer, there may never have been N.W.A.'s massive success in the 1980s and early 1990s, or Snoop Dogg, or Eminem, or West Coast gangsta rap and everything that arose out of it. Oh, and his foray into the headphone industry has turned him into almost-a-billionaire.





Jay Z in 2013. (Joel Ryan/Invision/AP)

## Jay-Z

Jay-Z couldn't get a record deal in the 1990s, so he sold records out of the trunk of his car. He went on to start Roc-A-Fella Records and became not just one of the best-selling musicians of all time but consistently ranked as among the best rap lyricists of all time. Oh, and aside from being the one of the richest men in hip-hop, he's still putting out music that generates plenty of buzz, including 2017's 4:44.

### Read more:

[The inside story of when Run-DMC met Aerosmith and changed music forever](#)

[Is this rap's real golden age?](#)

[Tupac nominated for Rock Hall of Fame. Expect even more rap artists in the future.](#)

 Gift Article



By **Elahe Izadi**

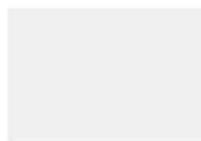
Elahe Izadi covers media for The Washington Post. She joined The Post in 2014 as a general assignment reporter, and has covered pop culture, Congress, demographics and breaking news.

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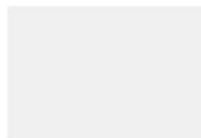
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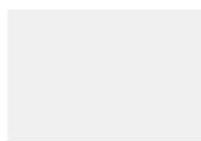
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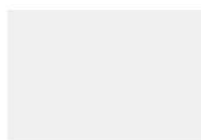
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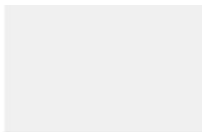
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## LL COOL J HONORED WITH I AM HIP-HOP AWARD AT 2011 BET HIP-HOP AWARDS

by Trent Fitzgerald | Published: October 11, 2011



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TWEET

Veteran rapper **LL Cool J** received the prestigious I Am Hip-Hop Award during the 2011 BET Hip-Hop Awards telecast. The Queens, N.Y. native was recognized for his long-standing career in rap. Beginning with his 1985 hits 'I Can't Live Without My Radio' and 'Rock the Bells,' LL has been rocking the mic for nearly three decades.

Before rapper **Nelly** presented LL with the award, he acknowledged the icon's accomplishments and offered this revelation, "If it wasn't for LL's [breakthrough rap ballad] 'I Need Love' there wouldn't be a 'How to Love' by **Lil Wayne**," he told the audience. A video montage followed as rap dignitaries such as Busta Rhymes and Russell Simmons recall their memories of LL Cool J's rise to fame.

At the podium, LL thanked God wife and family. Then, like a true MC, LL Cool J use his acceptance speech to spit an uplifting rhyme about his life and career. Read it below:

“ My acceptance speech/ What I won't do is try preach / I won't assume  
that I am smarter than you and try to teach / What I will do is set an  
example for you and inspire you to reach for the stars that's beyond  
mars that space bars can't delete.

Because without a dream fulfilled your life's incomplete / A hearst, a  
limousine without a backseat / The worst, this Usain Bolt without feet /  
Real life aint Hollywood, it's Halloween / Every day is trick or treat / It  
aint a red carpet it's a bloody sidewalk from the wolves eating red meat  
/ And these spotlights don't come with money they come with police /  
Millionaires cry about raising taxes on the elite / They won't feed us, as  
they'd rather defeat us / Like an aborted fetus.

But your greatest feat is to get back up on your feet / Did I mention, life  
aint a sprint it's a marathon / Really stressful on your tendons/and with  
the shape the economy is in today, you better run to the polls like skinny  
Kenyans / 26 miles miles and two hours and three minutes / It wasn't  
weeks or months / It took us 400 years to raise the debt limit / So don't  
lose faith, there's a sweet life out there and one day you will taste / And  
just like any marathon, you must monitor your pace / And watch out for  
the haters pushing drinks up in your face / Maintain your focus through  
the one and daune and dahatoo / And when you win your award make



the age and karma and created. And when you hit your stride, there

sure you put in a safe place/and be prepared for whatever...just in case.”

LL Cool J is still hard as hell.

**Filed Under:** LL Cool J, Rhythmic, Urban

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LL Cool J

Awards

Showing all 17 wins and 44 nominations

### Primetime Emmy Awards

2018	Nominee Primetime Emmy	Outstanding Structured Reality Program Lip Sync Battle (2015) Shared with: Michael H. Miller (co-executive producer) Danielle Flora (producer) Lindsay John (senior producer) Mariana Ferraro (supervising producer) Pete Diobilda (co-executive producer) Leah Culton (co-executive producer) (as Leah Culton Gonzalez) Todd Yasul (executive producer) Stephen Merchant (executive producer) John Krasinski (executive producer) Jay Peterson (executive producer) Casey Patterson (executive producer)
2017	Nominee Primetime Emmy	Outstanding Structured Reality Program Lip Sync Battle (2015) Shared with: Casey Patterson (executive producer) Jay Peterson (executive producer) John Krasinski (executive producer) Stephen Merchant (executive producer) James McKinlay (executive producer) Leah Culton (co-executive producer) Pete Diobilda (co-executive producer) Genna Gintzig (supervising producer) Danielle Flora (producer)
2016	Nominee Primetime Emmy	Outstanding Structured Reality Program Lip Sync Battle (2015) Shared with: Casey Patterson (executive producer) Jay Peterson (executive producer) John Krasinski (executive producer) Stephen Merchant (executive producer) Leah Culton (co-executive producer)
2012	Nominee Primetime Emmy	Outstanding Special Class Programs The 54th Annual Grammy Awards (2012) Shared with: Ken Ehrlich (executive producer)

### All Def Movie Awards

2016	Nominee All Def Movie Award	Best Black Survivor in a Movie Deep Blue Sea (1999)
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### American Music Awards

1992	Nominee American Music Award	Favorite Soul/R&B Male Artist
1988	Nominee American Music Award	Favorite Soul/R&B Album For "Bigger & Deffer" Favorite Soul/R&B Male Artist

### BET Comedy Awards

2004	Winner BET Comedy Award	Outstanding Lead Actor in a Box Office Movie Deliver Us from Eva (2003)
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### Black Reel Awards

2004	Nominee Black Reel	Film: Best Actor Deliver Us from Eva (2003) Best Song Deliver Us from Eva (2003) Shared with: Amerle (Writer, Performer) 50 Cent (Writer) Tone (Writer) Poke (Writer) Allan Wayne Felder (Writer) Kenneth Burke (Writer) Norma Jean Wright (Writer) For the song "Paradise"
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### Blockbuster Entertainment Awards

2000	Winner Blockbuster Entertainment Award	Favorite Supporting Actor - Action Deep Blue Sea (1999)
1999	Nominee Blockbuster Entertainment Award	Favorite Supporting Actor - Horror Halloween H20: 20 Years Later (1998)

### Grammy Awards

2005	Nominee Grammy	Best Rap Album For the album "The Definition"
2004	Nominee Grammy	Best Rap/Sung Collaboration Shared with: Marc Dorsey For the song "Luv U Better"
1998	Nominee	Best Rap Solo Performance

LL Cool J


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Year	Award	Category
1997	<b>Winner</b> Grammy	Best Rap Solo Performance For "Hey Lover"
	<b>Nominee</b> Grammy	Best Rap Album For the album "Mr. Smith."
1994	<b>Nominee</b> Grammy	Best Rap Solo Performance For "Stand By Your Man"
1993	<b>Nominee</b> Grammy	Best Rap Solo Performance For "Strictly Business"
1992	<b>Winner</b> Grammy	Best Rap Solo Performance For "Mama Said Knock You Out"
1989	<b>Nominee</b> Grammy	Best Rap Performance For "Going Back to Cali"

### Image Awards (NAACP)

2020	<b>Nominee</b> Image Award	Outstanding Host in a Reality/Reality Competition, Game Show or Variety (Series or Special) - Individual or Ensemble <a href="#">Lip Sync Battle (2015)</a>
2018	<b>Winner</b> Image Award	Outstanding Host in a Reality/Reality Competition, Game Show or Variety (Series or Special) - Individual or Ensemble <a href="#">Lip Sync Battle (2015)</a>
2016	<b>Nominee</b> Image Award	Outstanding Actor in a Drama Series <a href="#">NCIS: Los Angeles (2009)</a>
2015	<b>Nominee</b> Image Award	Outstanding Actor in a Drama Series <a href="#">NCIS: Los Angeles (2009)</a>
2014	<b>Winner</b> Image Award	Outstanding Actor in a Drama Series <a href="#">NCIS: Los Angeles (2009)</a>
2013	<b>Winner</b> Image Award	Outstanding Actor in a Drama Series <a href="#">NCIS: Los Angeles (2009)</a>
2012	<b>Winner</b> Image Award	Outstanding Actor in a Drama Series <a href="#">NCIS: Los Angeles (2009)</a>
2011	<b>Winner</b> Image Award	Outstanding Actor in a Drama Series <a href="#">NCIS: Los Angeles (2009)</a>
2010	<b>Nominee</b> Image Award	Outstanding Actor in a Drama Series <a href="#">NCIS: Los Angeles (2009)</a>
2000	<b>Nominee</b> Image Award	Outstanding Supporting Actor in a Motion Picture <a href="#">Deep Blue Sea (1999)</a>
1998	<b>Nominee</b> Image Award	Outstanding Lead Actor in a Comedy Series <a href="#">In the House (1995)</a>
1997	<b>Nominee</b> Image Award	Outstanding Lead Actor in a Comedy Series <a href="#">In the House (1995)</a>
1996	<b>Nominee</b> Image Award	Outstanding Lead Actor in a Comedy Series <a href="#">In the House (1995)</a>

### Kids' Choice Awards, USA

2005	<b>Nominee</b> Blimp Award	Favorite Male Singer
1997	<b>Nominee</b> Blimp Award	Favorite Television Actor <a href="#">In the House (1995)</a>

### MTV Video Music Awards (VMA)

1997	<b>Winner</b> Michael Jackson Video Vanguard Award	
1996	<b>Nominee</b> VMA	Best Rap Video <a href="#">LL Cool J: Doin' It (1996)</a>
1991	<b>Winner</b> VMA	Best Rap Video <a href="#">LL Cool J: Mama Said Knock You Out (1991)</a>

### National Film and Television Awards, USA

2018	<b>Nominee</b> National Film and Television Award	Best Actor in a TV Series <a href="#">NCIS: Los Angeles (2009)</a>
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### People's Choice Awards, USA

2017	<b>Nominee</b> People's Choice Award	Favorite TV Crime Drama Actor
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### PGA Awards

2018	<b>Nominee</b> PGA Award	Outstanding Producer of Competition Television <a href="#">Lip Sync Battle (2015)</a> Shared with: Casey Patterson Jay Peterson John Krasinski Stephen Merchant James McKinlay Leah Culton Pete Diabilda Corina Gintzig Lindsay John Jacob R. Burke Diane Perrotta Season 2
2017	<b>Nominee</b>	Outstanding Producer of Competition Television <a href="#">Lip Sync Battle (2015)</a> Shared with: Casey Patterson Jay Peterson

2009	PGA Award	John Krasinski Stephen Merchant Leah Culton Genna Gintzig Season 1, Season 2
Prism Awards		
2014	Nominee Prism Award	Male Performance in a Drama Series Multi-Episode Storyline NCIS: Los Angeles (2009)
ShoWest Convention, USA		
2003	Winner ShoWest Award	Male Star of Tomorrow
Soul Train Awards		
1997	Nominee Soul Train Award	Best R&B/Soul or Rap Music Video LL Cool J: Doin' It (1996)
1991	Nominee Soul Train Award	Best Rap Album For the album: "Mama Said Knock You Out"
1988	Winner Soul Train Award	Best Rap Album For the album: "Bigger and Deffer"
		Best Rap Single For the song: "I Need Love"
1987	Nominee Soul Train Award	Best Rap Album For the album: "Radio"
Teen Choice Awards		
2013	Winner Teen Choice Award	Choice TV Actor: Action NCIS: Los Angeles (2009)
2012	Nominee Teen Choice Award	Choice TV Actor: Action NCIS: Los Angeles (2009)
2011	Nominee Teen Choice Award	Choice TV Actor: Action NCIS: Los Angeles (2009)
2010	Nominee Teen Choice Award	Choice TV Actor: Action NCIS: Los Angeles (2009)
2006	Nominee Teen Choice Award	Movies - Choice Liplock Last Holiday (2006) Shared with: Queen Latifah
2005	Nominee Teen Choice Award	Choice Rap Artist in a Movie Mindhunters (2004)
2003	Nominee Teen Choice Award	Choice Music - Single Shared with: Jennifer Lopez For the song "All I Have".
		Choice Music - Hook-Up Shared with: Jennifer Lopez For the song "All I Have".
The Kennedy Center Honors		
2017	Winner Kennedy Center Honors	
Walk of Fame		
2016	Winner Star on the Walk of Fame	Recording On January 21, 2016. At 6901 Hollywood Blvd.
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# Exhibit E



From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

For the Notorious B.I.G. song, see *Going Back to Cali* (The Notorious B.I.G. song).

The song features LL Cool J vacillating about moving to California, rapping in the chorus, "I'm going back to Cali", followed by "I don't think so". In the verses, he describes a trip to Los Angeles in which he meets several women but is scared off because they are too sexually aggressive. The basic concept for the song was Rubin's, based on his own ambivalence about possibly moving from New York City to Los Angeles.<sup>[1]</sup>

The b-side is "Jack The Ripper", a diss track aimed at Kool Moe Dee, as a response to Moe Dee's "How Ya Like Me Now".

- 1 Music video
- 2 Covers
- 3 Parodies and references
- 4 Track listing
- 5 Charts
- 6 Certifications
- 7 References

The music video for "Going Back to Cali" was directed by Ric Menello. It was shot in black and white and was filmed mostly at two Los Angeles landmarks, the Venice neighborhood and the Griffith Observatory, as an homage to two of Menello's favorite films, *Touch of Evil* (1958) and *Rebel Without a Cause* (1955), respectively.<sup>[1]</sup> It featured appearances by record producer Rick Rubin, models Ele Keats, Ally Downs and MTV's veejay Martha Quinn.

Rock band Sevendust covered the song on the 2000 album *Take a Bite Outta Rhyme: A Rock Tribute to Rap*.

- The 1990 music video "Going Back to Brooklyn", starring Colin Quinn and directed by Ben Stiller, parodied the song and music video. In the video, Quinn raps about being afraid to return to his home town because he is no longer tough enough.
- The 1990 Sonic Youth song "Kool Thing" includes references to "Going Back to Cali" in both the song's lyrics and its music video; the song was intended as an attack on LL Cool J for his perceived misogyny.
- The 2008 promotional video "Going Back to Philly", intended to promote the upcoming season of *It's Always Sunny in Philadelphia*, had its music performed by Jeru the Damaja, with the video featuring the show's cast.
- The music video for Eminem's 2013 song "Berzerk" referred to the "Going Back to Cali" video in a scene showing Rick Rubin playing cards.<sup>[1]</sup>
- In 2015, Jimmy Fallon cold-opened an episode of *The Tonight Show*, with a shortened version of the song and music video, to kick off a week of hosting the show in California. LL Cool J has a cameo appearance in the video.<sup>[2]</sup>
- The ESPN commercial for the Los Angeles Rams August 13 preseason game opener against the Dallas Cowboys uses the song.
- The song was briefly featured in the 2017 movie *Transformers: The Last Knight*, one of the live-action movies that are based on the Transformers toyline.
- The song was used in the third season of the Netflix series *Narcos*. The final episode of the season was named *Going Back to Cali*, a play on words between Cali (short for California) and Cali (the city in Colombia where the show takes place).

1 "Going Back to Cali" (R. Rubin, J. T. Smith) – 3:57  
2 "Jack the Ripper" (Rubin, Smith) – 4:50

Chart	Position
<i>Billboard</i> Hot 100	31 <sup>[3]</sup>
Hot R&B/Hip-Hop Songs	12 <sup>[4]</sup>
Hot Dance Music/Maxi-Singles Sales	19 <sup>[5]</sup>

Region	Certification	Certified units/sales
United States (RIAA) <sup>[6]</sup>	Platinum	1,000,000 <sup>†</sup>

<sup>†</sup> Sales+streaming figures based on certification alone.

1. ^ a b c Aushenker, Michael (December 31, 2013). "'Going Back to Cali,' again: In December 1987, a then 20-year-old L.L. Cool J filmed an artsy black-and-white rap video on Venice Beach". Argonaut News.
2. ^ Youtube "Jimmy Fallon's 'Going Back To Cali' Cold Open (with LL Cool J)"
3. ^ "LL Cool J". *Billboard*. Retrieved 2020-06-19.
4. ^ "LL Cool J". *Billboard*. Retrieved 2020 06 19.
5. ^ "LL Cool J". *Billboard*. Retrieved 2020-06-19.
6. ^ "American single certifications – L.L. Cool J – Going Back To Cali". Recording Industry Association of America.



V • T • E	<b>LL Cool J</b>	[hide]
	Discography	
<b>Studio albums</b>	Radio • Bigger and Deffer • Walking with a Panther • Mama Said Knock You Out • 14 Shots to the Dome • Mr. Smith • Phenomenon • G.O.A.T. • 10 • The DEFinition • Todd Smith • Exit 13 • Authentic	

Compilations

*All World: Greatest Hits* • *All World 2*

Singles

"I Can't Live Without My Radio" • "Rock the Bells" • "You'll Rock" • "I'm Bad" • "I Need Love" • **"Going Back to Cali"** • "I'm That Type of Guy" • "Big Ole Butt" • "One Shot at Love" • "Jingling Baby" • "To da Break of Dawn" • "The Boomin' System" • "Around the Way Girl" • "Mama Said Knock You Out" • "6 Minutes of Pleasure" • "Who's Afraid of the Big Bad Wolf?" • "Strictly Business" • "How I'm Comin'" • "Back Seat (of My Jeep)" • "Pink Cookies in a Plastic Bag Getting Crushed by Buildings" • "Stand By Your Man" • "Hey Lover" • "Doin' It" • "Loungin'" • "I Shot Ya" • "Ain't Nobody" • "Hit 'Em High (The Monstars' Anthem)" • "Phenomenon" • "4, 3, 2, 1" • "Father" • "Candy" • "Zoom" • "Say What" • "Deepest Blues" • "Shut 'Em Down" • "Imagine That" • "You and Me" • "Put Your Hands Up" • "Luv U Better" • "Paradise" • "All I Have" • "Amazin'" • "Headsprung" • "Hush" • "Control Myself" • "Cry" • "Baby"

Featured singles

"Rampage" • "This Is for the Lover in You" • "Incredible" • "Fatty Girl" • "All I Have" • "We Are the World 25 for Haiti"

Other songs

"Accidental Racist"

Authority control

MusicBrainz release group@

Categories: 1987 songs | 1988 singles | LL Cool J songs | Songs about California | Songs written by LL Cool J | Song recordings produced by Rick Rubin | Songs written by Rick Rubin | Def Jam Recordings singles | Black-and-white music videos

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https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Going\_Back\_to\_Cali\_(LL\_Cool\_J\_song)

# Exhibit F





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# GOLD & PLATINUM


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- About the Awards
- Certification Criteria
- Apply
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RIAA's historic Gold® & Platinum® Program defines success in the recorded music industry.

Originally conceived to honor artists and track sound recording sales, Gold & Platinum Awards have come to stand as a benchmark of success for any artist – whether they've just released their first song or Greatest Hits album. [Check out our interactive timeline to learn about the program's storied history.](#)

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AWARDS BY 



MOST RECENT

TOP TALLIES

ARTISTS

ALBUM/SINGLE

ADVANCED SEARCH 

AWARD	ARTIST	TITLE	CERTIFICATION DATE ▾	LABEL	FORMAT
	L.L. COOL J	GOING BACK TO CALI	May 30, 2017	DEF JAM	SINGLE
SHARE 					MORE DETAILS ▾



The Recording Industry Association of America® advocates for recorded music and the people and companies that create it in the United States. RIAA's several hundred members – ranging from major American music groups with global reach to artist-owned labels and small businesses – make up the world's most vibrant and innovative music community, working to help artists reach their potential and connect with fans while supporting hundreds of thousands of American jobs.

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# EXHIBIT B

IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE  
BEFORE THE TRADEMARK TRIAL AND APPEAL BOARD

*In re Matter of Reg. No. 5,240,371 for the trademark  
**BACK TO CALI** in Classes 9 and 41*

Cancellation No. 92-080089

James Todd Smith,

Petitioner,

v.

David Addy,

Registrant.

**SECOND AMENDED PETITION FOR  
CANCELLATION**

Commissioner for Trademarks  
ATTN: Trademark Trial and Appeal Board  
P.O. Box 1451  
Alexandria, VA 22313-1451

Dear Commissioner:

Petitioner James Todd Smith, an individual and United States citizen (“Petitioner”), having his principal place of business at 6311 Romaine Street, Suite 4330, Los Angeles, California 90038, believes that he is and will be damaged by the trademark shown in Registration No. 5,240,371 for the mark BACK TO CALI (the “Registration”), and hereby petitions to cancel such Registration on the following grounds:

**FACTUAL BACKGROUND REGARDING  
PETITIONER’S GOING BACK TO CALI MARK**

1. Petitioner is the world renowned American rapper, record producer, composer, actor and entrepreneur professionally known as LL Cool J (“LL Cool J” or “Petitioner”). Attached hereto as **Exhibit A** is a true and correct printout from the informational website Wikipedia describing LL Cool J.

2. Over the past thirty-seven years, Petitioner has released thirteen studio albums and two greatest hits compilations, has appeared in numerous films, including *Any Given Sunday*, *S.W.A.T.*,



*Mindhunters*, and others, and currently plays NCIS Special Agent Sam Hanna in the CBS crime drama television series *NCIS: Los Angeles*. See Exhibit A; see also **Exhibit B**, printouts from Petitioner's profile on <imdb.com>. Petitioner also maintains a website at <llcoolj.com>, and social media pages on Facebook (7.2 million followers), Instagram (2.9 million followers), and Twitter (5 million followers). True and correct printouts of pages from the aforementioned websites reflecting the online presence and number of followers enjoyed by Petitioner are attached as **Exhibit C**. In addition, Petitioner has been credited with hundreds of television appearances, including as a guest, performer, presenter, and host (see Exhibit B).

3. During his extensive career, Petitioner has won two Grammy Awards, six MTV Video Music Awards, three Soul Train Music Awards, five NAACP Image Awards, a Teen Choice award, BET Comedy Award, and Billboard Music Award, and has been nominated for numerous additional awards, including four Primetime Emmys. Petitioner was honored with the I Am Hip Hop Award at the BET Hip-Hop Awards in 2011, given a star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame in 2016, and inducted into The Rock and Roll Hall of Fame in 2021. In 2017, Petitioner made history as the first hip-hop artist to earn a prestigious Kennedy Center Honors, one of America's highest achievements for performers. Attached as **Exhibit D** are true and correct internet printouts regarding Petitioner's many awards, honors, and nominations.

4. Petitioner is known for numerous hit songs, including the song "~~Go in~~Going Back to Cali." "~~Go in~~Going Back to Cali" was released in 1988 on the soundtrack for the hit motion picture *Less Than Zero*, and continues to be offered for sale and sold to date. The song was written by Petitioner and Rick Rubin, the legendary music producer and record company executive. On May 30, 2017, "~~Go in~~Going Back to Cali" was certified platinum by the Recording Industry Association of America ("RIAA"), indicating sales in excess of one million units. See Exhibit A; see also **Exhibit E**, a printout from Wikipedia, and **Exhibit F**, a printout from RIAA's website at <riaa.com>, evidencing the platinum

certification and fame of Petitioner's song "~~Go~~in'Going Back to Cali." Because of Petitioner's tremendous success and acclaim, fans worldwide have come to associate ~~GOIN'~~GOING BACK TO CALI with Petitioner, and ~~GOIN'~~GOING BACK CALI has acquired secondary meaning and functions as a trademark.

**FACTUAL BACKGROUND REGARDING REGISTRANT  
AND THE REGISTRATION OF BACK TO CALI**

5. On November 17, 2016, Registrant David Addy, an individual and citizen of Germany, having an address of 2251 Altisma Way, #202, Carlsbad, California 92009, applied to register the mark BACK TO CALI for "Musical sound recordings; audiovisual recordings featuring music and musical entertainment; downloadable musical sound recordings; downloadable audiovisual recordings featuring music and musical entertainment; pre-recorded DVDs, CDs featuring music and musical entertainment; interactive applications included in this class, namely, CD-ROMs featuring music and musical entertainment; computer software and computer programs used to access and download sound recordings and audio-visual recordings in the field of music; computer game software and computer game programs; downloadable electronic publications in the nature of magazines, newsletters, catalogs, and booklets in the fields of music, the music industry, musical entertainment, musical recordings, and musical artists; sound files in machine-readable form, recorded and downloadable, namely, musical recordings included in this class; image and sound files in machine-readable form, recorded and downloadable, namely, musical audio-visual recordings included in this class; downloadable ring tones via the internet and wireless devices; magnetically encoded pre-paid telephone cards; smart cards containing programming used to download recordings and audio-visual recordings in the field of music" in Class 9, and for "Educational services, namely, providing classes, seminars, workshops, training in the fields of music, the music industry, musical entertainment, musical recordings, and musical artists, producing recordings and organizing musical tours; entertainment services, namely, providing a website

featuring information in the field of music and providing a website featuring information in the field of musical sound recordings, video clips, audiovisual recordings featuring music and musical artists, their histories, their professional engagements and their musical recordings and other entertainment information; entertainment services, namely, arranging and conducting concerts, presentation of live show performances, organizing a musical festival, concerts and tours of musical groups for concerts, live musical performances and providing information on musical festivals, music groups and information on the musical groups appearing in such a festival by means of a website and a global computer network; organizing community sporting and cultural activities; music publishing services; publishing electronic publications, not downloadable; publication of texts other than publicity texts; services of a publishing firm, except printing, in the nature of publishing of electronic publications, books and magazines; publishing printed matter other than for advertising purposes in electronic form, namely, online electronic publishing of books, songbooks, and sheet music; organization of sports competitions for education and entertainment; editing of radio and television programs; entertainment services, namely, artists' services in the nature of live musical performances; ticket reservation and booking services for entertainment in the fields of sporting, entertainment, and cultural events and science expositions. providing radio and television programs in the field of music, the music industry, musical entertainment, musical recordings, and musical artists; educational and entertainment services, namely, continuing programs about music, musical groups, musical recordings, musical video recordings accessible by radio, television, mobile phones, and computer networks; presentation of musical performances; production of television shows, films, television programs, audio, video and cinematographic recordings; organization of entertainment shows, namely, production of television shows; music production services; sound recording studio services; composing of music for others, film production" in Class 41 on an in-use basis, claiming a date of first use anywhere and in commerce of January 1, 2016. The application was assigned Serial No. 87/240,256 (the "Application").

6. On July 11, 2017, the Application matured to, and the Office issued, the Registration.

**FIRST BASIS FOR CANCELLATION  
(Likelihood of Confusion)**

7. Petitioner incorporates by reference the allegations contained in Paragraphs 1 to 6 herein.

8. Petitioner's ~~GOIN'~~GOING BACK TO CALI mark was used for musical recordings prior to the mark shown in the Registration. Petitioner has priority over Registrant. Petitioner's use of his ~~GOIN'~~GOING BACK TO CALI mark for musical recordings pre-dates Registrant's filing date of the Application and any use of the BACK TO CALI mark by decades.

9. The continued registration of BACK TO CALI by Registrant is likely to cause confusion, mistake, or deception as to the source or origin of, or affiliation, connection, or association with, Petitioner's musical recordings.

**SECOND BASIS FOR CANCELLATION  
(False Suggestion of a Connection)**

10. Petitioner incorporates the allegations contained in Paragraphs 1 to 9 herein.

11. The name GOING ~~BACK TO CALI and/or GOIN'~~ BACK TO CALI is associated with Petitioner as a result of his fame as LL Cool J and the fame of his "~~GoIn'~~Going Back to Cali" platinum-selling song released in 1988.

12. Registrant's BACK TO CALI mark is nearly identical to the name ~~GOIN'~~GOING BACK TO CALI, which was previously used by Petitioner. The name ~~GOIN'~~GOING BACK TO CALI is associated with Petitioner, and is recognized as such in that it uniquely and unmistakably points to Petitioner under his LL Cool J pseudonym. Petitioner is not connected with the products and services sold or offered by Registrant (to the extent such products and services are still offered) under Registrant's BACK TO CALI mark. The fame and reputation of Petitioner is of such a nature that a connection with Petitioner and/or



LL Cool J is presumed when Registrant's BACK TO CALI mark is used for or with Registrant's goods and services.

13. The mark shown in the Registration is associated with the Petitioner and/or LL Cool J, and thus, falsely suggests a connection with Petitioner and/or LL Cool J.

### **THIRD BASIS FOR CANCELLATION (Abandonment)**

14. Petitioner incorporates the allegations contained in Paragraphs 1 to 13 herein.

15. On information and belief, Registrant is not currently using the BACK TO CALI mark for any of the goods or services identified in the Registration in the United States. On information and belief, Registrant does not intend to resume use of the BACK TO CALI mark for the goods and or services listed in the Registration within the reasonably foreseeable future.

16. On information and belief, Registrant has not used the BACK TO CALI mark for any of the goods or services listed in the Registration in the United States for more than three consecutive years, demonstrating a *prima facie* case of abandonment under 15 U.S.C. § 1127.

### **FOURTH BASIS FOR CANCELLATION (Non-Use of Mark)**

17. Petitioner incorporates the allegations contained in Paragraphs 1 to 16 herein.

18. On information and belief, at the time of filing the Application, Registrant was not using the BACK TO CALI mark on or for all of the goods and services for which registration was being sought.

19. Registrant nonetheless claimed use of the BACK TO CALI mark for all of the goods and services identified in the Application and the Registration issued on that basis.

### **DAMAGE CAUSED TO PETITIONER**

20. Petitioner will be damaged by the continued registration of BACK TO CALI in that the Registration gives Registrant a *prima facie* exclusive right to the use of BACK TO CALI, despite the likelihood of confusion, mistake, or deception, the likelihood of association, connection, or affiliation

with Petitioner and Petitioner's ~~GOIN'~~GOING BACK TO CALI trademark, or as to the origin, sponsorship or approval by Petitioner of Registrant's goods or commercial activities, the false suggestion of a connection, as described above, and the non-use of the BACK TO CALI mark for all identified goods and services at the time of filing the Application. Petitioner is further damaged by the Registration because Registrant is no longer using BACK TO CALI for the goods and services identified in the Registration and, on information and belief, has not been used for three or more years.

WHEREFORE, Petitioner prays that Registration No. 5,240,371 issued on July 11, 2017, be canceled.

Respectfully submitted,  
SHEPPARD MULLIN RICHTER & HAMPTON LLP

Dated: ~~November 23~~July 25, 20222023

/Paul A. Bost/  
Jill M. Pietrini  
Paul A. Bost  
1901 Avenue of the Stars, Suite 1600  
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(310) 228-3700  
*Attorneys for Petitioner James Todd Smith*

SMRH:~~4880-4523-2957.1~~4890-7803-9410.1

<b>Summary report:</b> <b>Litera Compare for Word 11.2.0.54 Document comparison done on</b> <b>7/25/2023 10:38:02 AM</b>	
<b>Style name:</b> SMRH Standard	
<b>Intelligent Table Comparison:</b> Active	
<b>Original DMS:</b> nd://4880-4523-2957/1/Amended Petition to Cancel BACK TO CALI in Classes 9 and 41 owned by David Addy - Rn. 5,240,371.doc	
<b>Modified DMS:</b> nd://4890-7803-9410/1/Second Amended Petition to Cancel BACK TO CALI in Classes 9 and 41 owned by David Addy - Rn. 5,240,371.doc	
<b>Changes:</b>	
<u>Add</u>	16
<del>Delete</del>	16
<del>Move From</del>	0
<u>Move To</u>	0
<u>Table Insert</u>	0
<del>Table Delete</del>	0
<u>Table moves to</u>	0
<del>Table moves from</del>	0
Embedded Graphics (Visio, ChemDraw, Images etc.)	0
Embedded Excel	0
Format changes	0
<b>Total Changes:</b>	32